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Ministerial

Heart-Searching Talks To Ministers

By

E. E. Shelhamer

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without
which no man shall see the Lord” Heb 12:14*

Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World

Wesleyan Heritage Publications

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HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

Renamed in Third, Revised Edition

HEART TALKS

To Ministers and Christian Workers

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

Original Edition
Copyright 1914
E. E. Shelhamer,
Atlanta, Ga.

-- Plus --

Third [Revised] Edition
No Date -- No Copyright

God's Bible School
1810 Young St. Cincinnati, Ohio

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

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INTRODUCTION TO THIS ELECTRONIC EDITION

This Electronic Edition of "Heart Talks" by E. E. Shelhamer combines the text of both the First Edition and the Third, Revised Edition of the book. Because the printed text of the Third, Revised Edition was the best for OCR, I used it as the main source for this Electronic Edition. I used the printed text of the First Edition as the source for those parts of that text that were excluded from the Third, Revised Edition.

The First Edition, named "Heart-Searching Talks To Ministers," included the following seven chapters that were excluded from the Third, Revised Edition, named "Heart Talks To Ministers and Christian Workers":

CHAPTER 4 -- The Worldly Minister, by Bishop William Pearce
CHAPTER 8 -- A Compromising Ministry, by Bishop B. R. Jones
CHAPTER 11 -- Unctionless Preachers, by E. E. Shelhamer and Others
CHAPTER 13 -- The Sentimental Preacher, X. Y. Z.
CHAPTER 17 -- The Preacher and His Choir, by Adam Clarke
CHAPTER 21 -- A Wise Minister Will Be Successful, by Charles G. Finney
CHAPTER 24 -- Directions Concerning Pronunciation, by John Wesley.

These chapters are re-incorporated into this Electronic Edition. The Third, Revised Edition also excluded various portions of messages which have likewise been brought back into this text. Two chapters brought into the Third, Revised Edition were not part of the First Edition:

CHAPTER 30 -- The Preparation of Sermons, by John Paul
CHAPTER 31 -- A Ministry For The Last Times, by Joseph H. Smith

I have followed the Chapter Numbering of the First Edition, with the exception that the two chapters that were not a part of that Edition have been named Chapters 30 and 31 in the Table of Contents for this Electronic Edition. Both in the Table of Contents and in the main body of the text I have substituted "E. E. Shelhamer and Others" for "The Author and Others." The Dedication was identical in the First and Third Editions. The Introductions and Prefaces were different, and I have included both in this Electronic Edition. -- DVM

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

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DEDICATION

To all ministers of the gospel, who are not content with feeble success, but who want to make "full proof" of their ministry, and be at their best for God and souls, is this volume humbly dedicated by your unworthy servant.

E. E. Shelhamer.

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

INTRODUCTION

[To the First Edition]

Another book! Are we not already fully supplied? With a certain class, perhaps! With some kinds of books we are doubtless over-supplied. Books are like men, the markets may be glutted with a certain class, but a book, like a man, with a message is ever in demand. The times call for both men and books that have a vision. Of the prophetic; the John Baptist type that will break in upon a self-complacent world and a sordid and ease-loving ministry. With the mercenary spirit ruling the masses, with destructive criticism and infidelity defiant in the Holy Place, with the ecclesiastical authorities stamping out the spiritual life of the church, with fun and frolic the order of the day in the house of God, with peace and affluence at the bid of a smooth-tongued and truckling ministry, it is not surprising that many holy men feel that "Idol "Shepherds" and a fallen Priesthood are the bane of the present age! "Like people, like priest" is axiomatic in the moral realm. "Like priest, like people" is no less axiomatic.

The apostolic martyr spirit is the need of the hour! It may be that many of the older preachers are beyond hope. Their "love of ease" and their "tables" have become a snare and a trap to them; they must continue to disappoint the heart of God and lie down, by and by, without hope. But to those who are awake, and to the young men who are now forming their habits of life and ministry this work, "Heart Talks to Preachers," comes as an oracle of God from the heart of as tender and faithful a shepherd as walks the earth.

The library of the ministry should be sowed down with the best and most spiritual literature on every phase of ministerial qualification, duties and dangers. "Heart Talks to Preachers" meets a long-felt need in this field.

I have known Rev. E. E. Shelhamer, the editor and author of this work for a number of years, and I have no doubt as to his ability and fitness for such a work. As Rev. H. C. Morrison has said, "He is strikingly original, truly scriptural, powerfully in earnest and reaches the heart of the people as few men we have heard, but always in the spirit of love and tenderness." Brother Shelhamer has a special gift of selection; he knows when and how to garner the best fruit. He knows where the apples grow. With the splendid array of talent he has called to his assistance, we would have been surprised with anything but the best results.

And what a variety of subjects! This work has chapters on, "The Worldly Minister," "Fallen Ministers," "The Envious Minister," "The Compromising Minister," "The Unctionless Preacher," "The Unwise Minister," "Pulpit Manners," "Circuit Manners," "Domestic Manners," "The Weeping Prophet," and many other timely subjects, twenty-nine chapters in all, and some of the chapters consider a variety of, important questions, with such a menu as "Heart Talks to Preachers" provides.

Surely all who read this work will be aroused, inspired, warned, and moved to the most earnest prayer and to the most intense activity. This work ought to find its way to the homes of ten thousand of the clergymen of America. God grant it may be so. Amen!

Rev. A. L. Whitcomb

Professor in Oskaloosa Holiness University

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

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E. E. Shelhamer

INTRODUCTION

[To The Third, Revised Edition]

Spiritual instruction in the churches is at a low ebb. Much emphasis is placed upon intellectual culture, attention is given to physical fitness, social studies are regarded as essential, but little thought is given to the direct impartation of spiritual truth necessary to strengthen the individual in the knowledge and love of God. In theological seminaries less emphasis is being placed upon the direct study of theology, and few modern seminary students are given the thorough grounding in philosophical and theological studies necessary to a right understanding of the principles of Christianity.

There is also a vanishing of many of the so-called prohibitions which marked the sanctity of the ministry within the church, or made definite the lines of demarcation between the church and the world. As a result the tendency on the part of the ministry and the church is away from the old lines of self-sacrifice, loyalty to convictions and the proclamation of those spiritual truths which laid bare the sins of worldliness. It is refreshing, therefore, to read the pages of a book so filled with wholesome advice to ministers and so dominated by a vision of spiritual truth as the Heart Talks With Ministers by Rev. E. E. Shelhamer.

We have known Rev. Shelhamer for a number of years, both as a preacher and as an editor. Rev. H. C. Morrison, D. D., writes that "He is strikingly original, truly scriptural, powerfully in earnest and reaches the heart of the people as few men we have heard, but always in the spirit of love and tenderness." Dr. A. I. Whitcomb, who wrote the introduction to the first edition of this book, says, "Brother Shelhamer has a special gift of selection; he knows when and how to garner the best fruit. He knows where the apples grow. With the splendid array of talent he has called to his assistance, we would have been surprised with anything but the best results."

Young men will find in this book the fruitage gleaned from the experience of spiritual men, both in America and in Europe. Men of more experience in the work of the ministry will find it helpful in preserving the standards which have guided spiritual men down through the years in their work of faith and labor of love. The subjects are timely, vital and interesting. Those who read its pages can but be inspired with new zeal for the old faith, and with increased prayer for the preservation of the high spiritual standards set forth in this admirable book.

H. Orton Wiley, Editor, Herald of Holiness.

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

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PREFACE

[To The First Edition]

An apology for publishing a book to ministers of the gospel might be necessary were it not for the fact that the voice of the Spirit and a chain of providences seemed to impress it upon us as a bounden duty. The reading after eminent ministers, for our own profit, was so helpful we felt like passing the good things on to our brethren. In order to lend a freshness to some of the "old corn," we have requested able men of our day to write upon certain subjects. Some responded while others did not and this made it necessary for the writer to take a number of subjects, which he had not originally anticipated.

There has been no effort at literary merit, or to inspire the ministry to greater oratorical ability, but rather to holiness, faithfulness and effectiveness.

The supreme importance attached to our sacred calling is best expressed by that prince of preachers, Charles G. Finney, in the following words:

"Brethren, our preaching will bear its legitimate fruits. If immorality prevails in the land, the fault is ours in a great degree. If there is a decay of conscience, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the public press lacks moral discrimination, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the church is degenerated and worldly, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the world loses its interest in religion, the pulpit is responsible for it. If Satan rules in our halls of legislation, the pulpit is responsible for it. If our politics become so corrupt that the very foundations of our government are ready to fall away, the pulpit is responsible for it. Let us not ignore this fact, my dear brethren; but let us lay it to heart, and be thoroughly awake to our responsibility in respect to the morals of this nation."

Oh, brethren, let us take these things to heart. Yours for a clean rather than a big work.

E. E. S.

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

To Ministers and Christian Workers

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

PREFACE

[To the Revised, Third Edition]

The unexpected popularity of "Heart Talks to Ministers", calls for a third- edition. And with this we change the title to Heart Talks to Ministers and Christian Workers. The reason for so doing is that many who are not regularly ordained ministers, yet feel called to be soul winners, and this is the class we want to help. Those who are so "set in their ways" as to need no advice are few compared with earnest Christian workers.

We have abbreviated the matter rendering it so concise and cheap that anyone can have a copy, and beg the reader, whether a clergyman or not, to help circulate the book, by sending marked copies to those who may read and profit by the same. Yours for a clean, rather than a big work.

E. E. Shelhamer

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS
To Ministers and Christian Workers
Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

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Chapter 1

WHY SOME PREACHERS ARE NOT IN DEMAND

by Bishop W. A. Sellew

"How do you like your preacher?" is a question frequently asked, and the reluctant reply in too many cases is somewhat as follows: "Well, that is a difficult question to answer. He is a good fellow, but some way he does not seem to build up our church or congregation. We would like a change at conference time, but I suppose we will have to get along with him another year." In other words that preacher is not in demand; he is not a success. He is, so far in his ministerial life, practically a failure.

Why is he not a success? He is fairly well educated, he has a nice family, his children are well behaved. He is a man of clean habits, an honest man, "a good fellow," yet in spite of all this and many other good qualities, he is not wanted. In order that the question at the head of this chapter may be intelligently answered, it may be necessary to specify what it means to be a successful preacher as it is viewed from the standpoint of this article.

1. The possession of intellectual attainments, be they ever so varied or brilliant, will not of themselves make a man a successful minister of the gospel. They may be helpful and very desirable, but they are not necessary. They may greatly add to his success, but they do not constitute the elemental basis of success. We must insist -- and very strongly, too -- upon this fact, although in these days of formal and worldly religion, this position is very unpopular and is one that will be met with much criticism.

2. To build up a large congregation or to gather together a large church membership cannot be accepted as conclusive evidence that a preacher is successful in his vocation. These conditions are very generally held in these times to be the very best, and in most cases the only conclusive proof of success that leads to ecclesiastical power and promotion. With this position we take issue and strongly contend that this very thing (estimating a preacher's success by numbers) is working irreparable injury to vital godliness and to the true prosperity of God's cause on earth. Ministers who make numbers their standard are a most serious menace to the cause of Christ and a great hindrance to the efforts of those preachers whose aim is to build up a spiritual church. This is the true basis and standard of success in the ministry. Where this standard prevails there will result a stronger and deeper spirituality, which will manifest itself by increased attendance at prayer meetings. Family piety will be developed, family altars will be erected which have been neglected and the church membership and the congregation will, almost without exception, be increased.

With these limitations we are now ready to answer the question, "Why some preachers are not in demand." There are very many reasons that might be given, but two or three at most will cover nine-tenths of the cases involved.

1. First of all some preachers are actually lazy. This is not an elegant word and it may sound harsh and disagreeable to some "ears polite" and it may be especially unpleasant to those to whom it applies, but nevertheless it is very expressive; it is a word in common use and everybody will know just what is meant when we use it. We might say they are "indolent" or "averse to labor" or "disinclined to action," but we prefer at this to say just what is meant, and say they are lazy.

Many preachers fall into this habit who would not have it in some other vocation. A preacher is not driven and crowded to his work like many other persons. The mechanic is routed out by the alarm clock, the factory whistle, or by the call of the watchman. The farmer is pushed to his work by the weather or the urgency of the season, but none of these things affect the preacher. He may, if he is so inclined, "take it easy." He can do now what is to be done, or he may put it off until another time. There is no one who is authorized to make him go or do. Unless a preacher takes himself in hand and forces himself to his duties it is quite easy to become careless, then indolent and then lazy.

Why should not a preacher be as diligent in his business as mechanics, laborers, farmers and business men are in their affairs? The very first of the rules for a preacher's conduct given by Mr. Wesley emphasizes this phase of a preacher's life. It says, "Be diligent. Never be unemployed. Never be triflingly employed, neither spend any more time at any place than is strictly necessary." No preacher can make a success who ignores this injunction. "Seest thou a man diligent in business? He shall stand before kings" (Prov. 22:29). With only ordinary ability and limited attainments a preacher who will work at his vocation as other successful men work at theirs will be in demand.

A preacher gives himself to God by a special and peculiar dedication. He gives up secular employment with the distinct pledge that he will be faithful and diligent in God's business. His time and effort to their full limit belong to God. What excuse can he give at the final accounting for that wasted time, that neglected opportunity? When he sits idly around the home or spends hours and frequently a whole day in merely social visiting, sometimes bordering dangerously on gossiping, he has broken his vow to God, wasted that which is more valuable than property and which it is difficult to ever redeem. Those who are supporting him in this idleness are also greatly wronged. They are all the while putting their money into a hole. All the conditions of such a life cry out to God for a radical change and for speedy reformation.

2. Another fruitful cause of failure in a preacher's life, perhaps equally so with the one above mentioned, and frequently accompanying it, is the lack of pastoral visiting. How a preacher can hope to succeed in his vocation without systematic and persistent effort in this direction is beyond comprehension. "Absent treatment" may be permitted to the physician, and it has been claimed that it is even effective in divine faith healing, but it will never answer the requirements of a pastor. He must meet people face to face in their own environments. He must for a time enter into their very lives and hear at first hand their "tale of woe" to become a "cure for souls."

In the vow taken when a preacher is ordained a deacon, the case is put in clear and unmistakable terms. It is his office to search for the sick, poor and impotent that they may be visited and relieved. "Will you do this gladly and willingly?" The answer is, "I will do so by the help of God." Here is a

solemn vow and pledge to do the very thing that will bring him success, and yet how many are found making excuses for not doing it.

It is of no use to mention here the petty and trifling excuses that are usually given for the neglect of this plain duty of a preacher's life. My brother, never again speak of these excuses. To those who understand the situation such excuses seem almost ridiculous, and we wonder how you can possibly take yourself seriously while making them. There are no excuses that can be accepted. You must undertake this plain duty in spite of all hindrances in yourself, in others and in your environments.

There is no one thing that a preacher can do to grip and hold the hearts of a community as that of visiting those who are sick and infirm. It affects not only the individual and families visited, but the whole body of that community. It is better than the higher type of preaching and will hide a multitude of faults. The preacher who does not do pastoral visiting may be tolerated by those whom he is serving, because they can do no better, but he will never be in demand.

3. Many preachers fail because, as they say in the West, they are not "good mixers." They have ability but not adaptability. They are set in their ways of doing things and they think they know just how such things should be done. A preacher enters his new field of labor impressed with this idea. He forgets that there are able and experienced members of his church who have the same ideas -- that they know how things should be done and who have behind them to back up their ways of doing many years of experience in environments and conditions that are new to him. In the place of waiting and observing condition: to find out whose ways are better, he attempts to bring his members to his way of thinking and doing; and then there is trouble. If his ways are really better than theirs, he must first get the confidence of his membership and then as a rule they will be ready to follow him in any reasonable changes. Confidence is a plant of slow growth. It must be secured to insure successful leadership.

And then a much more serious phase of the situation is that some preachers are so set in having their own way that they attempt to put off on their members their ideas and even their notions as if they were convictions, and in this way assume to give a religious phase to conditions that should be kept entirely separate from religion. They defend themselves in their stubbornness by claiming that they are "standing for the right" and are "defending die truth," and that they "must act according to their conscience," while the fact is that the things for which they are contending have no moral quality involved in them whatever.

A preacher should never yield convictions that involve any moral principle whatever to any idea of expediency, but he can and must adapt himself to such conditions as exist, even though they may seem to be undesirable, in which no moral principle is at stake, until a time shall come when he shall be able to influence a change for the better.

No preacher has a right to tear down and destroy until he is able to put something better in its place. This class of preachers will attempt to reform in a few months social and economic conditions that have existed in a community for a long period of time, and by a lack of adaptability ruin forever their prospect that might have existed, of making much needed changes.

4. It is not necessary here to mention the fact that some preachers fail because they engage in secular employment, as it is an established and admitted fact that the two callings are incompatible, and no preacher can make a success in the ministry and continually follows a secular employment.

And now, my brother minister, if you see your faults, in the name of the Lord and for the sake of your profession and for the love of souls, have the courage to admit the fact, and make the effort of your life to recover yourself before it shall be too late; "redeeming the time because the days are evil."

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

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Chapter 2 **A MINISTER WHO HAS MISSED HIS CALLING** **by Rev. William T. McArthur**

Ministers who have mistaken their calling may be divided into three classes. First, the unregenerate; second, the disqualified; third, the unqualified.

By the unregenerate we simply mean those who have never experienced saving grace or the new birth; their name is legion. They have entered the ministry from various motives; some of them, like the priests of Jeroboam, simply as a profession or a means of livelihood. Some are natural educators and would shine as college professors; others are natural actors and would shine on the stage, while others are natural reformers and would shine in politics; all are naturally religious. Some have high ideals of righteousness; greed and selfishness as well as the baser manifestations of the natural life are abhorrent to them. They vary in their tastes as regards church service; some are esthetic -- the stained glass window, the solemn sound of the pipe organ, and the peal of the chimes, all find response in their religious nature. If they are in the non-conformist ministry they will persist in introducing ritualism into the churches which they serve. They will plead for gowns, surplices, chants, responsive readings and everything that goes with natural religion. Others of them will go to the opposite extreme and introduce the picture show and the vaudeville. To say that these men have chosen the ministry for the sake of money and an easy living is unfair, for men of their ability and education could, except in rare instances, command more money and an easier living in some other walk of life. Their trouble is simply that they have never been saved. They are natural men pursuing the natural bent of their natural minds. We do not say that there are no mercenaries among them, for they are to be found everywhere. The love of money is a temptation to which all men are liable. It requires courage for any minister to preach the whole truth fearlessly when his bread and butter are at stake. We have known even good men to put on the soft pedal and sing small, lest some good supporter should be offended. It is from this first class that our modern destructive critics usually come; they have not the Holy Spirit to guide them, and left to their own earthly, sensual" wisdom, they naturally fall an easy prey to the doctrines of the New Thought and kindred heresies.

The second class, the disqualified men who were divinely called and anointed, received their message from God and delivered it, but who are now no longer in the ministry, usually betake themselves to the insurance business; occasionally they are found selling sewing machines or musical instruments. Recently while on the Pacific Coast, the writer was credibly informed that there were over two thousand such men in the city of Los Angeles alone. Their trouble is simply that they have preached one thing and practiced another, and the more exalted their testimony the more terrible has been their fall.

God is determined that every man shall practice what he preaches or cease to preach. It may be some have fallen into actual sin and have never fully confessed it, while others have simply failed to walk in their God-given light. It may be that some, grown weary of a precarious existence, have,

like Demas, turned aside to secular pursuits. It is pathetic to see these clerical derelicts floating aimlessly on life's sea endangering and impeding the progress of others, while the church is so sadly in need of workers. If they could only humble themselves and confess their sin or unfaithfulness they would find forgiveness and restoration and their ministry would be more effective than ever before; but we can scarcely recall a single instance of their being restored. If they had been in some episcopal connection where the people were obliged to support them notwithstanding their inefficiency, they might have continued in their office indefinitely. If they were treated by the Christian Church as backsliders instead of ex-ministers, there would be more hope for them.

The third class are those honest, consecrated souls, who are willing to serve and to suffer for Jesus Christ, and yet are not possessed of the necessary qualifications to fit them for effective public ministry. They engage in the work of the Lord because they have a desire for the salvation of the lost and find satisfaction in religious work, but they have no message; they weary their congregations and do not remain long in one field. Like the people Paul deals with, in 2 Cor. 3:1, they are rich in letters of commendation. These letters are doubtless given by congregations or pastors who are eager to get rid of them. They seem to feel that the Church of God owes them a living; and they make themselves amazingly at home wherever they may be entertained. They are always ready to preach and enjoy their own effort immensely. They usually prey upon holiness people and have extreme views of Truth. They have perfect confidence in themselves and cannot understand why they are not favorably received. They bring upon themselves and their families untold suffering as well as upon those to whom they attempt to minister. The writer, after twenty years of experience, has been led to adopt certain rules; one is that of pushing forward the backward and of holding back the forward. Another is never to employ a preacher who is "out of a job." God's man is always busy.

Sometimes the supposed call to the ministry is nothing more or less than conviction of sin. This may seem strange, but the writer recalls an instance of this kind. A good brother who felt strongly led to enter the ministry, after having had a successful business career, entered a Bible school and was graduated. Just before his graduation, however, he attended a service where he heard, for the first time in his life, teaching upon the subject of restitution. He immediately became exercised regarding a difficulty that had arisen some years previous between himself and a neighbor. After considerable thought and prayer he yielded to the conviction, and made restitution, with the result that his desire to preach was gone, while joy and peace filled his soul. He was now ready to return to his former vocation.

When Moses was eager he was unfit; when after forty years of disappointment and discipline he had become fit, his eagerness had given place to diffidence. "No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron" (Heb. 5:4)

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

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E. E. Shelhamer

Chapter 3 **THE OVER-SENSITIVE MINISTER, OR HE WHO CANNOT TAKE REPROOF** by Rev. A. T. Jennings

The true basis of righteous reproof is twofold; it stands in the fact that sometimes men do not do as well as they know; and also in the fact that men do not always know as well as they should, how to act. It follows, therefore, that the man who resents righteous reproof assumes that he is always right; or that he always knows absolutely what is right. Either assumption leads to a great deal of wrong doing, hence the necessity of faithful reproof.

There is a great difference as to sensitiveness in different persons, but it is not true that any one is without sensitiveness. The chief difference between one person and another in this respect is not that one is sensitive and the other is not, but is in the way each deals with this trait of his character. Holiness of character does not mean the absence of sensitiveness, but it does mean that the holy man does right regardless of how he may feel as to the way any one treats him. The better a man is, the more tender his heart will be, consequently the more he will feel an insult or an injury; but instead of being turned aside from the way of holiness he will adhere all the more strictly thereto. If holiness consisted in the absence of sensitiveness, then the harder a man's heart might become, the more holy he would be; but tenderness of heart and holiness are companions, hence we must look to something other than hardening of the heart as a way of taking proper care of hurt feelings. Holy men know when they are unjustly dealt with as well as any men; they have tender feelings as well as any men, but they also have a fidelity which holds them to the truth and right conduct whatever may come to them.

Ministers of the gospel are men divinely chosen to be the leaders of men, to set up standards of right conduct, to set right examples, hence it is a great evil when such men lack the true sense of righteousness and when they are ignorant of the true way of holiness. In order to insure them against such a dangerous course God has determined that they shall be reprovved by at least four powerful factors, and thus make perfect men of God out of them: First, they must be reprovved by the Holy Spirit Himself. It is a part of His work to reprove all men. Second, God has placed within every man a conscience which approves him when he intends to do right, and reprovves him when he intends to do wrong, passing infallibly upon the moral quality of every man's intentions. Third, the truth, and especially the truth revealed in the Bible, is a very powerful reprovver of men, and especially of ministers of the gospel. It is in part because of this wonderful power of the revealed truth to reprove men that God demands that ministers shall be so distinctly men of the one book; for the same reason Satan seeks to destroy this one book; unconverted or backslidden men seek to substitute some other book for it; but God holds His ministers to this book that they may be properly reprovved by it. Fourth, God has ordained that men shall reprove each other. No man can see everything at once from every possible angle of vision, and since God wants His ministers to see every moral question from

every possible point of view, He has provided that men shall exchange thoughts and thus one man reproves another until every man of God is thoroughly furnished for every good work.

A certain man bought a farm, moved into the home, then went away and upon returning approached the house from a side he had not noticed before, and it was so new and strange to him that he did not know when he had reached his own home. God wants His ministers to know every truth with which they deal and every moral and spiritual question with which they have to do from every side. A man built a bridge across the gutter in approaching his house and was so dissatisfied with it that he tore up a part of it and built it over again. He said that his mistake was due to his haste and that when he had laid out the simple structure he looked at it from a point too close to it. Had he walked away several rods and looked at the bridge and its surroundings until he had the whole in mind he would not have made such a mistake. God wants His ministers to get the view close at hand and from farther away and He uses one man to help another see the whole. In other words He uses men to reprove and instruct each other. It is a great sin when a minister of the gospel refuses to accept the reproof God sends by any one of these four ways.

The way a man deals with these four reprovers is an index to his own character. If he allows his sensitiveness to make him resent reproof it proves that he may be deceived in himself; that he may imagine that he knows more than he really does know. It may prove that he deceives himself into believing that he is right when he is wrong. It may show that he lacks humility; or that he does not honestly want to be right and at his best more than anything else in the world. Until a man reaches the point where he is willing to pay the price for being at his very best for God he is likely to resent reproof; but when he supremely desires to be at his best, he will welcome God's way of making him a workman who has no need to be ashamed.

The more responsive to reproof a man is, the better man he will be made by the reproof. God designs to improve men by reproofing them. The tender heart which supremely desires to be right and at its best for God will be benefited by reproof; while the hard-hearted, stiff-necked, conceited person will resent reproof and go away confirmed in his conceit. Therefore, instead of courting an unfeeling heart, an obdurate heart, a heart that cannot be wounded, we should covet and cultivate a heart that is warm and tender and sensitive and that will promptly respond to the reproof God administers and profit thereby.

In a matter of such vital importance we would be lacking in our full duty if we did not also point out the spirit in which men who are chosen to be reprovers of their fellowmen should do their work. We may trust the Holy Spirit to do the work of a reprover perfectly; the conscience of every man will do its work exactly right; the Bible, or revealed truth, never makes any mistakes when permitted to act according to its divinely appointed purpose. The only dangerous factor in this reproofing work is when humanity comes in to do its work. Men who reprove other men should be men of much prayer, profound students of the Bible, careful observers of God's ways, humble in the extreme, devout, earnest, faithful men who would rather die than to overdo anything or underdo it. They must esteem the will of God above everything else in the world. They should reach that point where they can do even the most difficult tasks without getting nervous or excited.

There is a wide difference between doing a thing after a long and severe struggle in a nervous and excited way; or doing a thing, promptly, easily and pleasantly. The reprover should reach the point where he is dead indeed unto the world and alive indeed unto God alone. James Smith felt reproved by his conscience, by the Holy Spirit, by the truth, by the example of a few faithful Christians, when he sought worldly amusements, and decided to drop everything of that kind, but he still had the longing for these things. Later when he died to them he lost all of that longing for these things of the world, and it was as easy for him to turn away from them as it was for him to breathe. The reprover should die to the opinions of men until, when he is clearly convinced that any contemplated course is from God, he will be able to proceed as easily and cheerfully and promptly as he breathes.

The man who closely observes will see that God often chooses very humble means for bringing to pass His wonderful ends, and in perfect accord with this thought, he will see that even the mighty and learned and wonderful men of the earth are often reproved by men of no account. About thirty-five years ago a young man of much natural and acquired ability entered the ministry. He was a careful student of the Bible, was sincere and wanted to be at his best, would apply himself for days to the study of some text, preach upon it, and in the class meeting which followed often learn more of the real meaning of that text from an unlearned old farmer's comments than he had learned in days of study. God used the very humble old man to help the young man. The true source of reproof is God and we should so regard it, whether He sends it to us by eloquent lips and silvery tongues or by the most common, humble means.

There is such value in righteous reproof that we should ask for it, welcome it, profit by it, and never resent or neglect it. Ministers especially should have appointed times when they speak kindly and in love to each other of whatever they regard as faulty or wrong, pointing out with discernment and fidelity everything they think would help a brother minister to be a better man of God, condemning faithfully but in the Spirit whatever weakens or in any way impairs usefulness, hinders fellowship or mars the work of God in the life. The lack of this kind of fidelity with each other leaves many ministers open to temptation and accounts for their fallen condition. The tendency to drift is so great that every man needs to be awakened often by tender but faithful reproof.

First. Ministers administer reproof to others and should be willing to accept what they give, and stand up like men and take what is given to them even when it may not be agreeable to the carnal nature. Resenting reproof is childish. We expect children to pout and get angry when reproved, but manly men should take reproof in a manly way and be glad to receive all the help obtainable in that as well as in every other way. The minister of the gospel who resents reproof is not only very foolish, but is often actually silly, as well as childish.

Second. Refusing reproof is often casting away one of the very best and most effective means of improvement. There is always danger that men who are never reproved will become settled into bad habits of one kind or another, and about the only sure means of avoiding the formation of such habits is for some friend to reprove the minister whenever he is found doing things that tend in the wrong direction. Many a man's usefulness would be greatly increased if he were to be set right whenever he gets started off on some strange or erratic course, and reproof seems to be about the only method of setting such men back in the right way. We knew one minister who greatly impaired his usefulness because he would pick his nose while in the pulpit, and another who would dress his

fingernails before his congregation, and another who would appear even at the communion table with his hands and clothing smelling of the stable where he had cared for cows and horses. If these men had been willing to accept reproof they would have been saved doing much harm and helped to do much more good than they were able to do while afflicting other people with their bad habits; and the same principle applies to even graver faults.

Third. Refusing to accept reproof may be shutting out of a man's life important light, for light on many of the vital questions of the day and hour comes by reproof. Unwillingness to be reproved accounts for the darkness which enshrouds the minds of so many ministers of the gospel and leaves them such ready dupes of the devil and victims of the various isms constantly afloat all about us.

Fourth. Declining reproof feeds the carnal mind. And this accounts for the failure of many a man who was once deeply spiritual and fervent and effective. It really means that he has backslidden, a condition into which he would hardly have fallen had he welcomed reproof and profited by it, even from his wife; but, alas! the man who imagines that he knows all he ought to know and is doing exactly right regardless of the judgment of other people, soon becomes a cumberer of the ground, against whom the edict will go forth, "Cut him down, for why should he cumber the ground?"

Fifth. The spirit which will not be reproved is open to delusions and other dangerous conditions and will be sure to do many unwise things, and closes the door against the richer, deeper spiritual experiences; and as a consequence the unreproved minister becomes a mere formalist, performing before his congregation with even less power and unction than the actor performs on the stage. The only way to keep some things growing and bearing fruit is to dig about them and keep the soil open to the air and rain and sunshine; and reproof is to the spirit of a man much like cultivation is to a thriving garden. Without the reproof the spirit is in danger of becoming like the arid desert. Many a man is dead and dried up and does not realize it because he will not be reproved.

Sixth. The mind that is closed to reproof is a dangerous mind, while the man who welcomes reproof is thereby fortified against many things that will destroy him if possible. It is a fact noted by all careful observers that an unusually large number of ministers of the gospel are falling each year into gross sin and immorality. This can all be averted. How? Surely he who wants to be exactly right and always at his best will welcome the faithful reproof of a friend, as one sent from God to do him good. Beware of the spirit that resents correction, for it leads with certainty to backsliding and to the bottomless pit.

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

Chapter 4 **THE WORLDLY MINISTER** by **Bishop William Pearce**

A preacher is an herald of the cross. A minister is one of the ability that God giveth that God in all things may be glorified.

A worldly minister is a contradiction in terms, an incongruity in the spiritual realm, a misfit in the moral, a blot upon the church's escutcheon, a prophecy of his own ill destiny. The Scriptures everywhere point out his terrible estate, and warn against his mighty sinfulness.

Balaam uttered one of the sublimest prophecies of scripture, yet was he a monumental corrupter, and greed for the gold that perisheth was more potent than the sublime substance of the holy revelation he was commissioned to give out.

God's sovereign will had fixed Korah's place among the picked priesthood, but an overwhelming ambition distressed his days and nights until he was fairly ambition driven, and his outcry against Moses, the chosen of God, met speedy retribution at the hand of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His own will.

Jonah is commanded to prophesy against Nineveh, but in his worldly view the pain he will incur will more than equal the protection of the Omnipotent, and for a while he must bear the hitherto unheard-of brunt of his stupid and stupendous disaffection. His biography can be again and again duplicated on great main lines among the lives of moderns who have heard the call to Nineveh but have nevertheless gone voyaging to Tarshish, or have turned Demas directors of a "silver mine." In Israel's decline many sought the sacred office for a piece of bread. A parallel is found in our day, though happily not on a large scale, in the men whose ill success in other callings, or native indolence, has, through the supineness of the doorkeepers, let them into the ministry for bread.

In all ages have appeared the self-called, the daubers with untempered mortar, the incense-burners to their own imaginary greatness, the facile imbibers of heresy, the "muck-rakers" whose continual employment is minding a fallen world's number one, the advocates of the anti-Christian order.

In New Testament times the mind naturally selects Judas as the acme and embodiment of all that is self-seeking, worldly and reprehensible. It is fair to infer, on the principle of the unity of carnality, that the reasonings of Judas that finally prompted the most significant betrayal of all time, pursued the same course as the reasonings of every worldly-minded minister in later times.

In some communions practically all the ministers are worldly. Any religious system based upon a sought justification by works, any religion that denies the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ curses its ministers with worldliness by the very existence of its tenets.

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

Chapter 5 **THE ENVIOUS PREACHER** by Rev. J. M. Humphrey

Solomon says, "Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous, but who is able to stand before envy?" Therefore, by this statement we are made to see clearly that envy is an unnatural characteristic, and is quite out of place even in the hearts of the unsaved, and is still more so in the heart of the child of God; but when it is found lurking in the breast of a mouthpiece of God, it is intolerable.

No doubt on judgment day when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed it will be discovered that envy was one of the chief enemies of the religion of Jesus Christ. If it were unmasked and making a bold attack upon the church, like the saloon, gambling dens and pleasure halls, we would know how to meet it, but since it has bedecked itself in the soft, downy robe of piety, and taken its seat in the pew and pulpit, it has become an almost unconquerable foe. For beneath the gilded robe of lamb-like piety, lies its red scorpion head, green eyes, forked tongue, and deadly sting. It has made a bloody trail all the way from creation's dawn to the present day. "We find it in Cain, who slew his brother. We find it in the dark, revengeful spirit of Saul who plotted for years the slaughter of David. We find it in the King of Israel when he pined for the vineyard of Naboth and shed his blood to gain it. Yes, it was envy that perpetrated that most atrocious crime ever planned in hell or executed on earth, on which the sun refused to look, and at which Nature gave signs of abhorrence by the rending of the rocks, the crucifixion of Christ; for the evangelist tells us that "for envy, the Jews delivered our Lord. Envy, like the worm, never infests but the fairest fruit; like a cunning bloodhound, it singles out the fattest deer in the flock."

Lord Clarendon says, "Envy is a weed that grows in all soils and climates, and is no less luxuriant in the country than in the court; it is not confined to any rank of men or extent of fortune, but rages in the breast of all degrees."

1. The first lamentable thing about the envious preacher is that he is not sanctified wholly, but is still in possession of a heart brimful of envy, jealousy, anger, pride, selfishness, covetousness, and every other trait of carnality found in the catalogue of sin. For carnality is a unit, hence wherever one trait exists all exist.

2. The next prominent thing in his disposition is "he is greatly pained and grieved at the sight of superior excellence or happiness enjoyed by another. He wishes the force of goodness to be restrained and the measure of happiness to be abated." He laments over the prosperity of another and secretly rejoices in his downfall.

"And next to him malicious Envy rode
Upon a ravenous wolf, and still did chaw
Between his cankered teeth a venomous toad
That all the poison ran about his jaw;
But inwardly he chawed his own maw
At neighbor's wealth that made him ever sad,
For death it was when any good he saw;
And wept, that cause of weeping none he had;
And when he heard of harm he waxed wondrous glad."

3. Still another thing about the envious preacher is, he always manages to find some flaw in the minister who eclipses him in preaching, even if he has to go back and dig up some old thing which occurred before he became a Christian. If he fails to succeed here, he will proceed to criticize his doctrine, grammar, pulpit-manners, or his lengthy discourses. If God honors his labor by giving him many souls for his hire, the envious preacher will be heard speaking disrespectfully of his work and pronouncing it superficial. Tacitus says, "When men are full of envy they disparage everything whether it is good or bad." The Apostle John came to Jesus and said, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name and we forbade him, because he followed not us. Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not; for he that is not against us is for." I hope the reader will not mistake my meaning and think that I endorse the method used by the popular evangelist who gets souls to profess religion by signing a card, turning over a new leaf and joining the church, for I do not. I am as greatly opposed to these sham revivals as I am to "Mormonism," "Christian Science," and "Millennium Dawnism," for they are all death-traps, ensnaring and ruining immortal souls. What I have reference to in the above statement is when the preacher, by the help of the Holy Ghost, really gets the devil of drunkenness, profanity, lying, stealing and wrongdoing cast out of men's hearts and gets them into "The Narrow Way."

4. The envious preacher is also quite restless and nervous when his congregation is contributing too liberally to the evangelist or missionary. Oftentimes he strives in an indirect way to prevent them shaking too much money into the hand of the evangelist, by publicly announcing that if anyone has anything toward defraying the expenses of the evangelist, they are requested to hand it in to the pastor so that a correct account may be kept.

5. The next earmark of envy is a feeling of gloominess and inward discontent when the bishop, presiding elder or former pastor visits his church and one of the members who has never invited him home for a meal prepares a reception for the visiting minister, and, in the meantime, forgets to invite the present pastor. If there is a vestige of carnality remaining in the heart of a preacher this will bring it to the surface.

6. Another noticeable thing in the disposition of the envious preacher is to feel secretly tried and aggravated when a member, commending the sermon delivered by the visiting minister, says he received more definite help through it than any sermon he had previously heard, or that it was the best and clearest sermon on that subject that he ever listened to; while at the same time the pastor had preached several sermons on the same subject which he considered fifty per cent more spiritual, logical, rhetorical, helpful and scriptural.

"Oh that malignant envy which turns pale,
And sickens, even if a friend prevail,
Which merit and successes pursue with hate
And damn the worth it cannot imitate."

7. The envious minister is also rather reluctant in recommending and pushing forward young ministers, especially those whose gifts and graces excel his. He does not make many openings for them in his field of labor. And during his absence, he always prefers leaving the work in the hands of a local preacher or some one greatly inferior to himself. He will sometimes retard or close a revival meeting which is being conducted in his own church, fearing that if it continues too long the evangelist might too completely win the hearts of the people and draw away some after him.

8. The minister of whom I am writing also feels ignored and slighted when his members ask counsel and spiritual advice of the presiding elder and former pastor, rather than of him. He also feels inwardly sore and secretly stirred when a member dies and leaves a request that a certain minister should preach the funeral. It also ruffles his feelings when the former pastor is called by some of the members to perform a marriage ceremony. I do not say it is right to treat the pastor thus, but he should be in possession of that love which "beareth all things, endureth all things" and never faileth.

9. The next bone which the envious preacher finds quite difficult to masticate, is when a brother evangelist delivers a less powerful sermon than he did the night previous, yet, notwithstanding that being a fact, troops of the very same sinners who sat under his sermon and acted as indifferently as the devil, were immediately touched by this last man's sermon and came flocking to the altar screaming for mercy. This sometimes strikes the envious preacher such a terrible blow that he finds it quite difficult to conceal his feelings. Poor fellow! He should have gone to the altar himself and been prayed for.

10. Still another prominent thing seen in the disposition of the above mentioned individual is, he feels secretly relieved and pleased when the star preacher or conference favorite gets into the "brush," makes a failure or fails to strike fire in his sermon, or when a slanderous report is circulated about him, whether it be true or false, just so it crops his feathers and causes him to pass out of public favor. He is also quick to take exception and pick up statements not clearly explained and thus give them a different meaning from what was intended. He does this in order to make it appear that the favorite preacher is not sound in doctrine or a safe teacher. Hence, by so doing, he hopes to cripple his influence and hinder his usefulness.

11. Again, this unhappy man does not relish hearing his members too frequently quoting the statements or sayings of the former pastor, neither does he like to hear them speak too often about his good sermons, helpful instruction, good management, thoughtfulness, self-sacrifice and piety; but rather enjoys hearing of his mistakes, ignorance, extravagance, and indolence. He also feels secretly pleased to find on visiting the neighbors that there are several families who did not take to the former pastor and are much delighted with the change. However, it sometimes causes him seasons of uneasiness and discontent when he is informed that some of the members still correspond with the former pastor or that he is coming to town.

12. The next manifestation of envy discovered in this diseased man is seen when he is placed on the "Stationing Committee." When the committee arrives at a certain juncture, he holds back and does not make any suggestions, neither does he vote or make any motions, especially when that favorite minister is in the field to be reelected to that prominent office or sent back to that star circuit or mother church. He will either suggest the name of some inefficient preacher to be sent there, or else remain silent with a secret hope that he himself may be elected and sent. He is willing to vote for and assist any brother who does not excel him in gifts and graces.

13. The only sermon he was ever known to commend and apparently enjoy, was when some strange minister came to the convention or camp ground and preached a sermon that surpassed all those previously delivered by the local brethren, who up until that time had been considered the big guns of the district. And while this sermon was being delivered, the envious preacher's joy was uncontrollable. His "Hallelujah," "Praise God for the truth," could be heard clear across the camp. He also told every friend he chanced to meet about that wonderful, powerful, unequalled sermon. It was not his love for truth that caused him to be so elated, but the fact of the matter was this -- those preachers who for years had eclipsed and outshone him were at last being surpassed and outshined. Therefore, he was more delighted in this than he would have been over the gift of a corner lot.

Friend, since reading this chapter, have you discovered that this germ of endless death lurks in your breast? If so, the only way to obtain a complete cure for this ulcer of hell is to seek with earnest prayer, fasting and faith the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire, which eradicates every trait of carnality from the heart and fills it with holy love which "ENVIETH NOT, vaunteth not itself, its not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not provoked, thinketh not evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things," and "never faileth."

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

Chapter 6 **THE UNWISE MINISTER** **by Rev. J. T. Logan**

There is perhaps no calling among the children of men that requires more wisdom for its successful prosecution than that of the minister of the gospel. He has to deal with men of many different temperaments, under varied circumstances, and amid the complex relations of life. It is his business to show people the sinfulness of their hearts, and to do this he must faithfully denounce their darling sins. He must uproot their prejudices. He must awaken their consciences. He must gain their favor. His supreme purpose in his ministrations must be to win them to Christ and to build them up in holiness. To be successful in this it is essential that he use much tact or wisdom.

The unwise minister fails at this point. He does not seem to know how to present truth and reach men. It is not because he is not pious that he fails in his work, but simply because he is unwise. It requires more than piety to make a successful preacher. If goodness were the sole requirements, then some of our grandmothers would make better preachers than we -- for they are better. Some of the most devoted, consecrated, self-denying men we have known have failed to be good soul winners, for no other reason than that they lacked tact in presenting truth and in dealing with souls. There are some men, both pious and talented, who can always be depended upon to do the right thing at the wrong time or in an improper manner; and by so doing they defeat the very object in view.

1. The unwise minister lacks discrimination in the choice of subjects to be presented. He cannot be trusted to preach on the great occasions because no one has the least idea what line of truth he will present, except that it will be inappropriate and untimely. One of these unwise ministers once preached a long, dry, doctrinal sermon on the subject of entire sanctification, Sunday night at a camp meeting to an audience composed of hundreds of the hardest sinners in that country, and then wondered why it fell flat. A great opportunity was forever lost because an unwise preacher was appointed by an unwise leader to preach on the occasion.

2. The unwise minister lacks tact in presenting the truth. His hobby is the negatives concerning religion. He never fails to present the "issues," regardless of the character of the congregation or the time or place. He feels that he must deliver his soul, and he gives a harangue against the lodge, tobacco, the theater, dance hall, fashionable attire, etc. (all subjects that the true preacher must speak upon, on proper occasions), to the great relief of his conscience and to the mortification of the spiritual people present who know that he is out of divine order. This man is an expert in the use of the sword and the club in cutting off ears and knocking off heads of those who do not agree with the notions he has in his head. And he feels that he is awfully persecuted if he is found fault with because of his untimely trumpet blowing. Two boys while at school heard of a hornets' nest at a point two miles out of their way home from the schoolhouse. But they traveled the distance, clubbed the nest, got their eyes bunged up by the disturbed hornets, and went home in sorry plight. In response

to their mother's question as to the cause of their swollen faces, one of them replied that the hornets had "persecuted" them. The application is apparent.

This unwise minister goes on the principle of the motto, "Give it to 'em while you can catch 'em," with the result that he does not get a chance to catch them very often. He who would endeavor to get the good will of his hearers before denouncing their sins is not a compromiser, but a tactful man. It is easy to arouse prejudice, put people on the defensive, and lose the opportunity to do them good. It is easier to stir up things and make the devil mad than it is to cast out demons and build up holy character. The work of the church should be constructive rather than destructive. It should seek to build up rather than to tear down -- and it requires a wise man to do this work. Some tearing down must necessarily be done, it is true, but the rearing of the spiritual superstructure is the essential work of the gospel minister. We have noticed that in tearing down a building to make room for a greater one, the most common workmen that the labor market can afford, men who command only small wages, are employed, and the roughest tools are used; but when the new edifice is being erected in its place skilled workmen of all kinds, who command higher wages, are employed, and the tools they use are of superior character. Some ministers are a decided success in tearing down, but are a perfect failure in the building up process.

Nor is it because of lack of education that some of these men fail. Some of the most impractical and unsuccessful preachers we have known have been college graduates. They never had a genuine revival, and were always too early or too late in their efforts to promote one. With all their natural and acquired ability, they did not know how to deal with sinners. Cowper shows that knowledge and wisdom are not synonymous:

"Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,
Have ofttimes no connection. Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men;
Wisdom, In minds attentive to their own.
Knowledge, a rude, unprofitable mass,
The mere materials with which wisdom builds,
Till smoothed and squared, and fitted to its p lace,
Does but encumber whom it seems to enrich.
Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much;
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more."

3. The unwise minister lacks tact in approaching people. It is, of course, the duty of the preacher to rebuke those who take the name of God in vain, but it is very unwise to rebuke them before others, if it is at all possible to speak to them privately. To rebuke them publicly will most generally arouse their anger and put them on the defensive, so that little good can be done them.

Sometimes this unwise, tactless minister, who is always a poor judge of human nature, will abruptly ask the sinner in a public place, perhaps when he is crowded with business affairs, and in the presence of others, if he is a Christian, and if the gentleman does not give him a satisfactory answer, or resists the interference, he will further complicate the case by telling him that he is on his way to the sulfurous regions. Had he patiently waited his opportunity, and spoken to him privately

and quietly, he would have made a good impression upon him and might have won him to Christ. But by his abrupt, tactless manner of approach he lost his chance. It is always wise to engage the unsaved one that we desire to win in conversation about a subject he is specially interested in, especially if he is a hardened sinner, before approaching the matter of his soul's salvation. If he is a farmer, for instance, talk about his crops, his yearling calf, his pretty colt, etc., and his eye will soon sparkle and an inroad will have been made for more serious subjects.

There was once an unsaved farmer living in the State of New York, who was greatly prejudiced against the preachers of a certain denomination, and he threatened to order the next one that came off his premises. A wise, godly, tactful minister heard of his threat, and, burdened for his soul, went to his home and found him at his barn. This farmer kept everything remarkably clean and tidy around his buildings, and the man of God entered into conversation with him, spoke approvingly about the neat and orderly appearance of the barn and contents, made inquiry about his crops, told him of his experience in working on a farm, and did not say a single word to him about his soul then. The farmer became deeply interested, invited the preacher to dinner, and afterward invited him to come again. But before he left the minister prayed with the family and spoke kindly to the man about his soul's welfare. A short time after, that farmer was gloriously converted, and in a little while a tent was pitched in his front yard and a quarterly meeting was held. This farmer and his wife furnished food for one hundred and twenty-five over the Sabbath of the meeting and also lodged seventy-five of them. He became a sincere, devoted, earnest Christian, and later died triumphantly. An unwise, tactless preacher would never have won this man for Christ.

Often the tactlessness of the unwise minister is manifested in his manner of reproving those who do wrong. The Bible says, "Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him." Especially is it the duty of the Christian minister to offer reproof where it is needed. Much harm has been done by some preachers' reproving others in the wrong way, at the wrong time, and in the wrong place. While some neglect to reprove wrong-doers, for fear of offending them, others are so severe in their language, so rough in their manner, so unkind in their spirit, and so untimely in their efforts, that, instead of making such an impression upon the offender that he will be inclined to mend his ways and draw nearer to the Lord, he is wounded and disposed to resent the attack that has been made upon him. It is very unwise for a parent to reprove or punish his child before company, and it shows a serious lack of good judgment for a preacher to reprove his church family from the pulpit in the presence of others; and when such a course of public reproof takes the form of habitual scolding it weakens his influence with those he desires to help. The pastor should tell the members of his flock what he sees wrong in them privately, if possible, and always in a kindly manner, and with a tender spirit. It is much easier for a minister to castigate his people from the pulpit than it is to gently reprove them face to face in the privacy of their homes. Awful havoc has been wrought to the fold of Christ by this unscriptural method of dealing with those that offend.

Of course, it is the bounden duty of the minister to preach against every form of sin, but in this paragraph we have reference solely to those persons who need personal reproof for something they have done or said. John Wesley, while thorough and radical in his ministrations, was very tender and tactful. It is related of him that once, in company with one of his young preachers, he was dining at the home of an influential family. The daughter, a very beautiful young lady, had a gold ring on her finger. The young man, knowing Mr. Wesley's opposition to the wearing of jewelry, and thinking

to gain his favor and at the same time rebuke the young woman for her pride, caught her hand and held it up in plain sight Of all the company at the table, and said, "Mr. Wesley, what do you think of this?" Instantly Mr. Wesley replied, "That is a beautiful hand." This is given as an illustration of the tactfulness of Mr. Wesley and the lack of wisdom on the part of the young preacher.

Happy is that minister of the gospel who is so endowed with grace in his heart and with common sense in his head, that in all of his ministrations he can measure up to the standard of efficiency set up by the Master when He said, "Be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves."

4. The unwise minister lacks tact in his pastoral visitation -- He makes a call at some time during the morning hours, a time that none should visit except to see the sick or on special occasions. The good sister who comes to the door gives evidence by the condition of her and dress that she has just come from the wash tub. She may courteously invite him inside, but in her inmost being she wishes him somewhere else. If he had any good judgment or tact he would hasten to make himself conspicuous by his absence and would not tarry on the order of his going, either. But the fact that he called at such an unseasonable hour justifies us in the thought that instead of leaving at once he will go inside and talk an hour. She may have grace enough to endure the ordeal, but there is no doubt she wishes that he had more common sense than to enter the home at this time. But he will talk on and on and not take any hint that he had better sing the short meter doxology and go elsewhere to try the patience of some other woman who may be busily engaged in preparing dinner for her family.

5. The unwise minister usually pays but little attention to time, order or method. He is satisfied to begin his service any time and cares not whether a meeting starts at the hour advertised or not, and thinks nothing of breaking faith with the public in this respect. He is perfectly content even if the Sunday school superintendent allows the school to encroach half an hour upon the time set for the preaching service, and he, in turn, will let his long-winded sermon run into the hour appointed for class meeting. It matters not to him if the people are late getting home for dinner and unsaved members of the family are inconvenienced and displeased, and he is too blind or too dumb to sense the reason some of them do not come back any more.

This unwise preacher perhaps gets very zealous and tries to have an altar service about the time the dinner bell is expected to ring. And what he may call the indifference of the pilgrims who cannot stay to the altar service is nothing less than the result of his lack of wisdom in not preaching shorter and starting that service sooner. Just this kind of unwise management at many of the camp meetings spoils the services and defeats the purpose of the meeting.

It is this same kind of unwise leadership that for courtesy's sake sometimes appoints preachers who are worldly conformed, compromising, Spiritless, and who know nothing about ministering the deep things of God, to occupy the pulpit at camp meetings, instead of using the very best talent for the occasion. Such a course always has a depressing effect upon the service, and seriously interferes with the highest interests of the camp meeting.

The unwise preacher scarcely ever advertises his services, although the columns of the paper are open to him free of cost, and he takes it for granted that the people will be so anxious to hear such

a talented man as he that they will go to the trouble to find out where he will preach and when he will be there -- but vacant pews tell the story both of his folly and his failure. The wise man uses every lawful means to carry on his work, while the unwise one either uses none, or uses them in an impractical manner.

6. The unwise preacher sometimes does great harm to the cause of Christ by not being discreet in his behavior toward those of the opposite sex. Because of his sacred calling he is expected to be possessed of high ideals and to be governed by holy principles; therefore he is generally more implicitly trusted than other persons are. Because there are more women than men actively engaged in church enterprise, the minister is inevitably brought into close relationship to them, and, on this account, he ought to be very prudent and not allow himself to be drawn into such terms of intimacy with them as would mar his influence, cripple his usefulness, or reflect upon the reputation of any of them. The work of the Lord has been seriously damaged many times by the married preacher driving to and from meetings at night with some woman other than a member of his family. It indicates a lamentable and inexcusable lack of wisdom for preachers to lay their hands on women while they are kneeling at the altar as seekers of religion. We have seen some ministers make themselves offensively familiar by conduct of this character. And to single out the pretty women seekers and give them special attention at the altar, and after meeting is dismissed taking them aside and giving them private advice (though in a public room) is a practice that is altogether objectionable, a method that stamps the preacher as being very unwise, to say the least. And for an unmarried minister to be guilty of flirting with any of the young women of his church, or in any way trifling with their affections, as many have done to the injury of God's cause, is not only exceedingly unwise, but such conduct is emphatically unbecoming any one professing the sacred name of Christ, if not downright wicked in its character. The admonition of the discipline to preachers is wise indeed, and timely always, "Converse sparingly and conduct yourself prudently with women." Timothy admonishes the preachers to treat "the elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity." A Methodist bishop, addressing a class of young preachers about to be ordained, said to them among other things, "In pastoral visiting always leave the home as pure as when you entered it." Such advice, if properly heeded, would prevent many a scandal and save the church of God from reproach.

7. The unwise preacher has done incalculable harm to the church by contracting debts and not paying them. It is easy to get into debt, but oftentimes difficult to get out of it. And for a minister to leave a circuit with debts unpaid is bound to reflect discredit upon him, seriously embarrass his successor, and damage the work of the Lord.

It is easy for the minister to lose his grip on the people and his influence upon the community by being careless about keeping his promises and paying his debts. It is always unfortunate when a minister is forced to ask for credit. It weakens his influence more or less, and puts him under obligation to his creditor. There may be cases where it is unavoidable, as in sickness or death in the family, but in most cases it can be avoided. It is better to live on bread and water and potatoes, with the bread scarce and the potatoes few, than to go in debt for provisions.

If the preacher does his full duty and commits his case into the hands of the Lord by prayer, the way will be opened and God will provide by touching some hearts to send the necessary things to

keep him and his from actual suffering. There are thousands of cases recorded in the history of the church -- and other thousands that have never been recorded -- of providential succor of God's servants in the hour of need. The time of man's extremity is the hour of God's opportunity. Instead of seeking credit or borrowing money or hunting a job, when the pinching time comes, the better way is to be faithful to duty and then pray until deliverance comes. By this course faith will be strengthened, trouble will be avoided, and the Lord will be honored.

There are those in the ministry who seem to have no conscience whatever about keeping their promises. They borrow money, promising faithfully to pay it back at a certain date, and when that time arrives they neither meet their obligations nor give any reason for not doing so. This failure to give a reason for not paying the indebtedness always lowers the individual in the mind of the creditor. If something happens to prevent the preacher from meeting the obligation, the least he ought to do would be to explain why he cannot meet it. Throughout Methodism, from its earliest history until the present, the General Rules of the societies have forbidden "borrowing without a probability of paying, taking up goods without a probability of paying for them." This is a wise rule, indeed, one the wise preacher will never violate, but one the unwise one often does.

8. The unwise minister has brought great reproach upon the cause of the Lord by engaging in speculations of various kinds. Without the least design of being dishonest or doing anything questionable, or thought of becoming involved themselves or involving others financially, and with the sincere purpose of helping themselves out of monetary Straits, some preachers have gone into schemes that promised to return speedy and great profits for the time, money and effort expended, such as patent gate rights, telephone stock, irrigation projects, mining stocks, land booms, etc. Because of their standing as ministers of the gospel, and the flattering representations they made, they succeeded in getting their friends to invest their money, all the way from one hundred dollars to thousands of them -- in some cases every penny they had saved for years, and some even placed mortgages upon their homes to raise the money required -- with the result that all these schemes failed and the money was lost. In some instances aged people who invested lost their homes and were compelled to endure extreme hardship and be dependent upon others for their living the remainder of their days.

Some conferences have been blighted and some preachers have forever lost their influence for good because of the failure of the schemes with which they were connected, and because of their inability to pay back and make good the losses which have been sustained through their unwise course. The work of the ministry requires the whole time and attention of the man called to labor for souls, and the Very least possible he engages in secular employment of any kind the better it will be for him and for others. But if circumstances ever arise that make it absolutely necessary for him to earn money aside from what he gets from his circuit, he should never engage in any of the get-rich-quick schemes that are always on hand to relieve people of their surplus cash and get preachers into trouble, or take any steps which might involve others in pecuniary loss.

Every minister of the gospel should aim to be a genuine success in his work. And not only aim at it, but he should strive to make good in his particular calling. And to do this he should study how to adapt himself to the various circumstances that arise and to the relations in which he is placed, and turn everything to good account for his Master. While tact may be in most cases a natural gift, and

not the fruit of either education or goodness, it certainly can be acquired by the diligent man who is determined to succeed in his sacred calling.

We suggest that there is help and hope for the tactless man, if he is disposed to help himself. The first thing for him to consider is that there must be a reason why he does not make more success of his ministry. The physician that does not have success soon loses his patients. The lawyer who cannot win his cases will soon be minus his clients. The teacher that is tactless will lose his position. The preacher has a right to expect success, and when it is not attained he should seek the cause. And in seeking it he should make a thorough examination of his methods and see whether they have not been the cause of his failure to win souls.

It will not do to blame the people and contend that it is the truth that offends and makes success impossible. The truth will undoubtedly offend some, however wisely it may be presented, but if it is preached in love accompanied by the Holy Spirit, it will produce conviction, and some at least will yield to its gracious influence and get saved.

Concerning tact, some one has written: "Men may have the gifts both of talent and of wit, but unless they have also prudence and judgment to dictate when, where, and the how those gifts are to be exerted, the possessors of them will conquer only where nothing is to be gained, and be defeated where everything is to be lost; they will be outdone by men of less brilliant but more convertible qualifications, and whose strength on one point is not counterbalanced by any disproportion in another."

The Wise Man has said, "He that winneth souls is wise," and another has written, "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

Chapter 7 **FALLEN MINISTERS** **by Bishop W. T. Hogue**

It is sad to think that one who has been entrusted by God and the Church with so high and holy an office as that of the Christian ministry should ever disgrace himself and his calling by falling into sensual sin. That such is the case, however, and that such cases are by no means few, are facts that cannot be denied.

No church on earth is free from this horrible reproach. There was one Judas even among the twelve apostles. There have been some bad men among Christ's ministers ever since. With all her vigilance the church cannot keep unworthy and even base men from insinuating themselves into her ministry; nor can she always keep those who began in the Spirit and promised well at the first from deteriorating in character and finally "turning the grace of God into lasciviousness."

It is especially humiliating and reproachful to those churches and associations which make a specialty of holiness, or entire sanctification, when they are confronted with the fact that even the preaching and the profession of holiness and membership in a body of people organized for the purpose of "spreading scriptural holiness over the land," is no security against certain of her ministers falling into sins of sexual impurity, and bringing reproach and disgrace upon the holy cause they represent.

The cases of this character, while forming only a small minority, are nevertheless by no means few. In fact, they appear to be on the increase. Tempting men to lust and sexual sin seems to be the masterpiece of Satanic effort in these days for reproaching and obstructing the thorough work of God. It should be understood once for all, and by all classes of people, that the frequent repetition of the holiness shibboleth is by no means a guarantee of purity of character on the part of him who speaks so readily on the subject. In not a few instances men who have begun to revel in beastliness give extraordinary attention to preaching holiness, and especially to the more radical issues connected with its general practice, as a mere hypocritical device for diverting attention from their own delinquencies and inconsistencies.

This of itself is no warrant for ceasing to declare clearly and boldly the whole counsel of God respecting the privilege and obligation of believers to be holy, or for declining to put forth special efforts to lead them into the precious experience of entire sanctification. We do not forbear to preach the great doctrine of regeneration, or to endeavor to bring men to experience the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, because many who profess to have been born again live wicked and hypocritical lives; and no more should we be deterred from pressing the claims of entire holiness upon all because a small minority of those who profess this high state basely yield to the dictates of the flesh and prove themselves "reprobate concerning the faith." As every counterfeit coin proves the existence and value of a genuine, so every hypocrite who masquerades under the guise and

profession of holiness is evidence that there are genuine saints, and that true saintship is eminently worthy of our best efforts to attain unto it.

But why is it that so many ministers are fallen, and fallen through gross sins of the flesh? We would naturally suppose that their sense of the sacredness and responsibility of their calling and their fear of the horrible consequences of proving recreant to their trust, as well as every self-respecting consideration, and also that lofty respect for womanhood which is so essential to the character of every true gentleman, would safeguard them from everything savoring of temptation to social impurity, and incline them to the restraint of passion, in bringing their bodies under, and keeping their appetites and passions in due subjection. But, alas! with some this is not the case, be it acknowledged with shame and sorrow. Too many who fancy themselves immune venture to play with fire and in doing so are badly burned. Too many try to play with pitch, only to become shamefully and horribly defiled.

The sin of which I write is becoming a great and lamentable curse in the land, an abomination of desolation in Zion, or I would forbear to register my public protest and testimony against it. The ministry must be kept socially and morally clean, or the whole church will ultimately be defiled. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump (loaf)."

What are some of the more common occasions through which ministers are betrayed into violation of the seventh commandment?

1. There are temptations in this direction which are peculiar to the ministerial office; temptations just such as no other class of men experience; and to be either uninformed or indifferent as to this fact is to be in jeopardy. If a man's Christian experience is superficial, if his ideals are low rather than lofty, and if he is given to experimenting as to how near the edge of the precipice he can go and not go over, the chances are that he will fall a victim to his own folly, and finally disgrace himself and the Church of God.

2. Some men, because of having been given to acts of social impurity before their conversion, have greater need than others to be guarded against the temptations above mentioned, lest they be "drawn away by their own lusts and enticed." Failing to be so guarded as prudence would require, they are soon found walking too near the brink of that pit which has hopelessly engulfed so many, and in a little while are added to the list of the shamefully fallen.

3. Others have prepared the way for their ultimate downfall by incontinence in the marriage relation. While holding no strained ideas on this subject, the writer does believe that there are many who, instead of maintaining at all times proper self-mastery, make the marriage relation a relation of legalized adultery, and in that relation live such incontinent lives as are injurious to themselves and to their wives, and which when certain physical changes occur in the course of nature with the latter, must be restrained. When this has been the case, and the time comes that demands restraint in the marriage relation, the man's will power has become so weakened that he is easily inclined, especially if temptation presents itself, to seek his accustomed gratification of passion in illicit relations. Possibly this accounts for the fact that the most of those ministers who fall through sexual impurity are not young men, but men approaching or past middle life.

4. An over-emphasis upon the emotional element in religion is sometimes an occasion of laxity in respect to one's social relations which betrays him to his ruin. When religion runs excessively to emotionalism, nothing is more natural than for some to conceive the idea that emotion is the chief thing, if not the sum and substance of religion. When this state of things occurs, laxity in social and moral relations is almost sure to follow. Men are deceived into the belief that their illicit conduct is at least venial, only so their religious emotions are easily and strongly stirred. One of the vilest men I ever met, when confronted with his rascality, denied nothing charged against him, but simply said, with a feigned, saintly smile, "It cannot be so, brother, or the Lord would not bless me as He does," and then gave further vent to his emotions in a vain endeavor to deceive those who were present.

5. Little indiscretions, little deviations from the pathway of strict prudence, little violations of the conventionalities of refined society, are courses which, in their relation to the opposite sex, have led many a minister on to more adventurous things. and have resulted either in his moral ruin, or in so smirching his character and reputation as thereby to render his continuance in the ministry a stench in the nostrils of the public, and an occasion of casting suspicion and reproach upon all ministers, however decently and holily they may have lived. The minister of the gospel who does not observe that plain and sensible rule given by John Wesley to preachers. "Converse sparingly and conduct yourself prudently with women," will almost certainly become a moral pest in society, involving himself and the church in disgrace.

There is no justification for a brother, in shaking hands with a lady, to hold her hand unduly, press it to his own, gaze into the depth of her eyes, etc., even though he shout hallelujah while doing so. If she has not the moral courage or the disposition to rebuke his course, some one else should do it, and in a way to impress him strongly with the impropriety of his conduct. There is no justification for a preacher's holding so many private conversations and having so many private correspondences as some do with certain female members of their congregations, even though the private interviews and communications may be ostensibly on religious topics. Religion always thrives better in the daylight, and in relations between the sexes that require no privacy. Nor is there any valid excuse for a minister's devoting himself in the way of personal labor, especially in camp meeting and revival work, chiefly to trying to help the female sex. With some men this is a suspicious circumstance. They seem to feel specially called to labor with girls and women.

Not that judiciously endeavoring to instruct and help those of the fair sex is in itself wrong; but it is the paying an over-attention to them, and that to the neglect of others just as needy and worthy, that should be guarded against, lest it cause one's good to be evil spoken of, and lest familiarity should breed contempt, or something worse. And, of course, he who cultivates what is generally known as "spiritual affinity" outside his own family relations, is to be regarded with grave suspicion, since "spiritual affinity," so-called, is almost sure to become fleshly affinity or free-love before long, if allowed to run its course. Alas! how numerous have been the instances in proof of this!

In view of the condition of affairs as outlined in the foregoing, what becomes the church's duty? Her duty is twofold: First, she should, through her press and from her pulpits, speak out the truth that needs to be emphasized on this subject, and speak it plainly, repeatedly, and in the power and demonstration of the Spirit. More healthful sentiment should be created touching these delicate matters, and the only way to create such sentiment is by "line upon line, line upon line, precept upon

precept, here a little, and there a little," until young, aged, and middle aged are properly instructed, indoctrinated, impressed and molded by the process. A conviction that such a course is required is my only apology for writing on this subject. If any think I have spoken too plainly, I would answer, as Richard Baxter did, when accused of writing too plainly regarding the sins of the English clergy of his day, changing the name of the country merely: "If the ministers of America had sinned in Latin, I might have written in Latin; but as they have sinned in English, I have written in English."

In the next place, the Church should be prompt and vigorous in executing her discipline against all offenders in this direction. Laxity in this matter is a sure way to increase the evil complained of. Whitewashing smutty cases puts the Church in complicity with those who have made the smut. As a rule, such men do not repent if not dealt with according to stern discipline. When their sin is discovered they will manifest tokens of great sorrow, sometimes, but in nine cases out of ten it is sorrow over the humiliation and inconvenience of being caught in their deviltry, rather than sorrow at having sinned against an infinitely holy God. Hence, the first thing they want to do is to fix the matter up in some way, any way, that will admit of their retaining their ministerial standing, however much it may compromise and smut the Church.

A truly penitent man who has sinned in the foregoing manner will accept the full penalty of the Church for his sin, and will do so uncomplainingly, acknowledging it to be only his just desert: while the man of mere pretended penitence will chafe under it, criticize the severity of it, and seek to work up a tide of sympathy such as will release him from its grasp. It seldom fails to be the case that, where the Church deals lightly with such a case, the party takes advantage of such leniency to make it appear that there was little or nothing against him, and that he is an aggrieved and injured party. The better way for the wrong-doer, for the Church, and for all parties concerned is, after the guilt of the offender has been established, either by his own confession or by an impartial and thorough trial, to execute the sentence fully which the church has affixed to such offense.

In too many instances, however, sympathy is allowed to interfere with the judicial process to the extent of defeating the end of Church discipline. Especially has this been the case among us in recent years. We used to have nothing but the most unsparing condemnation for those churches which whitewashed such cases, or passed them over lightly; and can it be that we will soon be following in the wake of those whose course we formerly condemned? God forbid. Yet such will be the case unless we put on nerve and courage enough to meet every such case in the spirit of the New Testament.

In dealing with all such cases the Church should be thorough. Let us remember that every minister among us, even though he may have admitted his guilt, has certain inalienable rights guaranteed to him by the Discipline of the Church, which we are bound to respect in all our proceedings against him, and which we should not allow to be set aside. But let us also remember that the church's honor is at stake in every case, and in no case allow sympathy to defeat the ends of truth and righteousness. They who pass such a case by lightly because of sympathy are laying themselves open to grave suspicions and inviting multiplied reproach upon the Christian ministry and the Church of God. The Church would be better off with no ministers than with large numbers of able men in her pulpits whose reputations have been smirched until they are malodorous.

But what about those cases in which ministers have contemplated impure conduct, and even sought to accomplish their devilish ends, but have been found out before the consummation of their Satanic plot? Clearly they are to be classed in the same category with out-and-out adulterers, and so far as church discipline is concerned, should be dealt with accordingly. In their cases there is prima facie evidence that the contemplated action was deliberate, which is not always so clear in the case of the wrong-doer who was not found out until the act of adultery had been committed. But these are the cases in which the strongest appeal is generally made for clemency, and made usually on the ground that there was no actual immorality or criminality committed.

Is the church warranted in entertaining such an appeal? By no means. If she goes into the business of condoning such rascals and wretches, she will soon be rotten to the core. We must execute the discipline vigorously and faithfully against all such hypocritical pretenders, and drive them from our ranks, or soon decent men will no longer seek admission to the ranks of our ministry, and some within the ranks, who have for many years stood for cleanness of life and purity of character, may feel compelled to take their stand outside, lest they should be judged by the general public as of the same ilk with those on whom the morally leprous spots so manifestly appeared.

"But even though a man has been guilty of lascivious and adulterous conduct, can he not repent; and if he does repent should not his brethren forgive him?" some one may ask. To this I reply, "Certainly he can and should repent; and, in case he manifests true repentance, his brethren should forgive him. But such forgiveness by no means carries with it the right to continue him in his ministerial relation. If a man steals my purse today, and tomorrow turns to me with penitence and asks to be forgiven, it is my duty as a Christian to forgive him; but it does not become my duty, even though I have forgiven him, and may believe God has also forgiven him, to trust him with my purse again as soon as he is forgiven. In doing that I would be placing temptation directly in his way, which might lead to his falling again."

It is doubtful as to whether, in ordinary cases, a minister of the gospel who has once brought reproach on himself and the cause of Christ by social impurity, whether the overt act was committed or failed for lack of opportunity, should ever again enter the ranks of the regular ministry. He can certainly never repent so deeply nor travel so far away, but that the unsavory odor of his former reputation will go with him, even as his own shadow ever accompanies him. If he should ever be restored it ought to be only after so long a time of living uprightly and purely that the confidence of the public has been fully regained, and that there is a general public demand for his services.

The foregoing has been written not for pleasure, but from a sense of duty. It has also been written in much tenderness, remembering the weakness of human nature, the subtlety and power of temptation, and the liability of all men to be overcome and to fall into the worst of sins. The fact that some will read what has been written to whom it will be the occasion of fresh grief over past failures and follies, has also been constantly before my mind, and has checked me where otherwise I might have employed invective and satire much more vigorously than has been done. I have written for the vindication of the truth and the honor of Christ's Church, and in doing so have had to write plainly, and call things by their proper names. I shall be sorry if I have grieved any, but I shall feel sure that those who may have most occasion to feel afflicted will, in their heart of hearts, approve of what I have written, whether acknowledging such to be the fact or not.

I will add but one word more, namely, in dealing with such cases as have been described in the foregoing, two thoughts should constantly guide our deliberations and actions -- the honor and purity of the Church of Christ, and the restoration of the erring brother to repentance, salvation and eternal life.

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

Chapter 8 **A COMPROMISING MINISTRY** **by Bishop B. R. Jones**

A divine call to the ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ is the highest honor that could be conferred upon a human intelligence, and is fraught with grave responsibilities. The eternal interests of the millions of earth's inhabitants depend upon the faithfulness of God's ambassadors.

The compromising preacher is one who does not declare the whole counsel of God, does not preach the full gospel; does not apply that gospel to the hearts of his hearers, and does not conform to it in his own life and character. Continued silence by a minister on questions of moral reformation made clear by the Scriptures, characterizes him as a time-server, a compromiser, a coward. Preachers who profess piety and indorse iniquity are an abomination altogether too common for the good of the Church and the well being of mankind. Too many preachers are controlled by a base, man-pleasing spirit; they offer no rebuke to the tide of worldliness and formality that is sweeping thousands on to endless torment. Evidently they fear to "cry aloud and spare riot" and show the people their sins.

The drift worldward is alarming. The superficial religion of the times may have breadth and polish, but it lacks depth, it lacks enduring qualities. It is as the thin veneering that soon cracks and exposes the untouched roughness beneath.

The spirit of the world is destructive to thorough gospel work, and as preachers become intoxicated with that spirit they are disqualified for the work of God. There is a false charity that allows looseness and worldliness and pride to go unreprieved in the churches. The pruning knife is left out of the pulpit, open violation of covenant obligations are winked at and the preacher keeps well supplied with untempered mortar with which he does an endless amount of daubing in the most approved style, while his deluded admirers delight in "Honeyed words, smooth speeches, flowery compliments, hollow courtesies and pretended friendships." A joking, fun-loving, ease-seeking, compromising ministry has never been known to take any chances on presenting unpopular truths from the pulpit. They cry, "peace, peace," when the danger signal should be hoisted, and thus souls are permitted to go quietly down to the pit. What a record to meet in the great day!

Such a condition of things is but the natural result of tolerating a worldly spirit in the church. Aristocracy, pride, passion, idle gossiping, "foolish talking and jesting," which form so conspicuous a part in social circles cannot be indulged in or countenanced by the clergy without serious consequences. If Satan can get a foothold in the form of suppers, parties, entertainments, games, theatrical performances and such like, he will soon wedge his way in until the passion for fun and fashion will have supplanted the desire for class meetings, prayer meetings and other means of grace designed to increase the devotion and spirituality of the church.

At many religious gatherings the very atmosphere seems charged with the spirit of worldliness and compromise. Preachers perch on stilts and convert the pulpit into a stage for putting on airs and enacting dramatic scenes. Mere politeness is passed off for religion, and a compound of scientific discussions and philosophical speculations, flavored with a thin solution of "higher criticism," is substituted for the gospel of Jesus Christ. As a result, multitudes who are in darkness and indifferent to their spiritual interests, will be eternally lost, unless by some means they can be aroused from the stupor that has settled over them as a result of sitting under the preaching of an adulterated gospel. A superficial religion is in too general demand. Pure gospel truth is too searching, too exacting for the times. The ancient cry of a rebellious nation is being reiterated today: "Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits." (Isa. 30 :1).

But where is the remedy? It is an easy matter to detect the weakness and formality of a compromising ministry, but not so easy to apply an effectual remedy. There is a source of life and power and spiritual energy with which the ministry must, through some means be brought in contact. This cannot be realized simply by "greater activity" on church lines; not alone by "increasing the gifts already attained;" not merely by becoming "more enthusiastic" in church work.

1. There must be deep humiliation before the Lord; worldly alliances must be renounced; inconsistent lives must be corrected. Men are needed for the ministry whose whole souls are in the work; men who are willing to make any sacrifices necessary for the upbuilding of the Redeemer's kingdom.

2. Ministers of the apostolic type are needed -- ministers who are clear in the experience of holiness and fear not to preach it, who abide under the anointing and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and are ready for the toils and stripes and hardships that such a ministry may involve. The sickly sentimentalism of the modern pulpit is exceedingly wearying to the spiritually enlightened mind. Truth, pure and scriptural, unmixed with human speculations, is the channel through which God operates.

3. The great need of the age is more preachers who keep revival fires burning, who value souls above dollars Or fame, who do not discount the emotional in religion, who "set face of steel" against demoralizing worldly amusements, and keep up the "line fence" between the church and the world. No preacher can afford to give his influence, his time, labors or means to support any type of religion that does not bear the gospel brand of simplicity and purity. Pious dissemblers, exercised by a resistless ambition for power and promotion, may, for a time, make a show of strength and devotion, may gather their admirers around them, enlist sympathy and support, but their race is usually short, and the counterfeit when exposed is the more contemptible.

4. From want of proper leadership many churches are utterly powerless to grapple with the swelling tide of worldliness by which they are well nigh deluged. The stupidity of the clergy is astounding. Every preacher, whatever denomination he may represent, should be free indeed -- free from sin, free from worldly defilement, free from the love of honor, fame or praise, free to follow the will of the Lord in all things. Against even "little departures" the ministry must carefully guard.

Brethren in the ministry, if you would confuse the enemy and defeat his schemes, pay no attention to his Satanic suggestions and enticements, but go forward faithfully preaching the full uncompromising gospel of Jesus Christ.

There is an ever-increasing need of such laborers. The ripening harvest demands them, the Lord of the harvest calls for them. Who will respond?

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

Chapter 9 **LOPSIDED MINISTERS** **by E. E. Shelhamer**

Ever since the fall, man has been more or less lopsided and unbalanced. They tell us that one side of the brain is larger than the other, one shoulder a little higher than the other, and that it is impossible to walk very far in a perfectly straight line without guiding ourselves by some object. Perhaps this is one reason why man travels in a circle when he becomes confused, or lost in the woods or on a vast prairie.

When it comes to theology we see things from different angles and this accounts for various precepts and practices. And when we feel sure we have a correct view of a certain truth, it is easy and natural to stress it out of proportion with some equally vital truth. Sometimes this is done to our own hurt and we defeat our own object, for if the pendulum swing too far in one direction it is likely to go too far in the opposite, before it finds its proper equilibrium. Much time and energy may be wasted before this valuable center is attained.

Perhaps there have lived but few men, if any, who have been so well saved and so properly balanced as to accomplish all that God designed and saw possible had they always kept in the Spirit and believed Him as fully as was their privilege. But as George Mueller said, "Perhaps there never lived a man who fully proved all the possibilities of faith and prayer." He might have gone farther and seen more accomplished.

Most great and good men have had some queer notions or peculiarities and yet succeeded. They did not succeed because of their eccentricities, but in spite of them, for doubtless they would have been greater successes had they been free from some of their mannerisms. For this purpose this chapter is written, that if possible we may profit by our own and others' failures. Though the writer is painfully conscious that he himself is not a pattern of symmetry, yet he hopes that he, as well as the reader, may improve by considering the following characters:

1. THE NEGATIVE PREACHER

This brother takes negative texts. He stresses good works and self-denial. His main theme is, "Stop this and stop that; you must and you mustn't," until the thing becomes musty indeed. He knows more about crucifixion suffering than resurrection glory. His preaching contains plenty of plain truth, but not enough corresponding unction. He can undeceive souls and get them to give up their false hopes better than he can lead them into a rich experience. He can get souls to the altar better than he can stimulate faith that brings them through. His converts are as straight as the Pharisees and often as void of holy joy. They have given up much, but have not received much in return, except a legal, strained-up religion.

2. THE CONSTRUCTIVE PREACHER

This brother leans in the other direction. He magnifies the promises and plays upon the emotions. He believes in building up and not tearing down, for he thinks a beautiful building more important than deep digging, preparatory to a rugged foundation. He does not enjoy listening to Jeremiah's commission (Jer. 1:10) wherein he was told to do six things, four of which were destructive and two constructive. A faithful ambassador was pouring red-hot truth into compromise and crookedness when one of these constructionalists jumped to his feet and said, "Don't talk so much about meeting conditions; that unsettles people; get the glory down and everything will be all right." But such glory is not abiding when built upon unconfessed, unforsaken sin. This brother has the ability to talk, sing and shout nearly everybody through that comes to the altar. His converts are great on shouting and being "free)" but some of them are too free in dodging bills and mingling with those of the opposite sex. Now this dear brother and his predecessor need to get together, live together and pull together that each may be more successful.

3. THE STIFF, PRECISE PREACHER

This dear brother has mistaken stiffness for saintliness, and preciseness for pungency. He takes pleasure in being called "Doctor" and in being looked up to as a "polished gentleman." He is cut out for a city charge and could reach a refined class of people if he were not so stiff and formal, if he were not so reserved and shut up in himself. But his self-consciousness and studied effort to be nice keep common people from feeling free and easy in his presence. It seems he has never learned the great secret that Paul did, namely: To be all things to all men that he might win some. Oh, that he could forget himself and get out of his little treadmill long enough to know how restful he would feel and how much more he would be appreciated.

4. THE RUDE, UNTIDY PREACHER

Though this brother severely criticizes his predecessor, it would be well if he had some of the good manners and surplus dignity that his brother could spare. It is simply another demonstration of the fact that humanity is lopsided. This rude preacher has gotten the idea that there is a special virtue in being blunt and outspoken -- in crying out against sin in a denunciatory tone. He is so loud and boisterous that people of poise and refinement have little use for him. He thinks nothing of intruding upon the rights of others and "making himself at home." He interrupts others in their conversation, for of course everybody is anxious to hear him (?). He seldom apologizes and if he does it is soon forgotten. He is boorish and inconsiderate in his ways, especially toward his inferiors and those of his own household. He ought to study such texts as, "Be courteous," and, "Be not wise in your own conceits."

This same brother adds to his unlovely ways by being untidy in appearance, for it is generally the case that coarseness and untidiness go hand in hand. We fear that this conception of plainness of dress borders onto slouchiness. With a little care he could brush his teeth and shoes, clean his collar, keep his neck and ears perfectly clean, and sponge and press his clothes. He could bathe frequently so as not to be offensive, and in other ways be more presentable. If anyone dares to say anything to him about these things he quotes Elijah, or John the Baptist to justify his course, but this will not do,

unless he preach to the same people and with as much power as did they. If the devil cannot keep a man from being devoted, he will be pleased to see him hinder his effectiveness by being unlovable and untidy.

5. THE SENSATIONALIST

This preacher imagines that to say startling and funny things will insure crowds and success. If he be an evangelist he will soon advertise himself and get his name and picture in the papers by attacking corruption and ripping up the municipal authorities. He is in his glory when somebody "gets mad." He is defiant and will not let others suggest how things should go. He may have some ability but sadly lacks in humility. These seldom go together.

If he be a pastor, he will adopt all kinds of novel methods to "draw the crowds" and make things "go lively." He believes in doing things on a big scale, even if he has to run in debt and make some one else pay the bills. As a rule he has a strong and winning personality which attracts to himself, but after he is gone, things go fiat. This proves that the converts of such men are the product of human effort and fleshly zeal, rather than the result of awful conviction, deep repentance and glorious conversion.

This same preacher who itches for notoriety is given to irreverence, especially in prayer. Sometimes he makes hideous sounds and goes through all kinds of contortions in order to "break through," "rout the devil" and draw attention to SELF. He uses such expressions as, "Glory be to your holy name," "You know all about it, Lord," and, "We praise you for what you are doing in these latter tunes." To justify such familiarity he quotes, "Come boldly (better say brassy) to a throne of grace." Such a spirit of irreverence destroys all real worship. True, sometimes a holy soul, in mighty, desperate earnestness, leaps over the bounds of formality of cut and dried expressions, yet carries an air of holy reverence. The old Jews held the names "God" and "Jehovah" in such awe and reverence that before writing them, they wiped their pens clean and dry. Oh, that we might have more of such reverence today.

6. THE "STAND-PATTER"

This preacher is positively opposed to sensational methods and will not permit them on his circuit. He is strictly "orthodox" and cannot accept anything until a bishop or high official first pronounces it "safe" and "sane." Everything must run in the dear old beaten path that "our church" and "her standards" have marked out. He is a diplomat and has mistaken this for devotion. He can see far ahead and knows what position to take that will enable him in the end to stand in with the winning side. He knows exactly how everything should be done, for either he was there when it started or he has taken pains to carefully inform himself. He has a right to sit back, look wise and criticize juvenile methods, for he has learned how to manipulate things with a nod of the head, or a sway of the hand. He can give instructions better than he can prevail in prayer, and pull fire out of the skies. He likes to sit on the platform or walk about conspicuously and order the battle, for, says he, "We must not have any fanaticism, or wildfire here." Oh, that a bolt of heavenly lightning might strike him and set him on fire! He would make a big blaze, for he is very dry.

7. THE EXTRAVAGANT PREACHER

This brother unfortunately never learned how to economize. Others can make one dollar go farther than several with him. To see him or his family in public one would think they had a large income. For instance: they have the latest cut of clothes; pleated shirts, ruffles and lace which require sending to the laundry in order to look nice; bright and delicate colors for children, which tend to feed pride and do not stand the wear; nothing second-hand or worn when "out of date."

Note the wastefulness in the kitchen; enough left on plates or given to a dog to feed a hungry child; plenty of canned goods from the grocery, which are neither best for health nor children, who ought to be taught to cook. Then there are the doctor bills. For every little ailment that could be corrected by proper diet, bathing or home remedies, the doctor has to be called, or patent medicine gulped down.

This same brother does not seem to have a conscience about running in debt and failing to keep his promise. He can borrow money and forget all about it. He has been known to move away and leave rent, grocery and laundry bills behind, without saying a word until he was "dunned." He will get Bibles, books and papers and never pay for them. He is not given to improving parsonage or church property, but when he does, he is built upon such a large scale that he needlessly goes in debt and makes it hard for his successor to pay the bills. When at conference, or a "big meeting," he is hard to please in entertaining, often calling for delicacies, eating late suppers and breakfasts, and sometimes he goes to a fine hotel after having been sent to a private home. This is not all: he leaves hotel bills for others to pay when it was supposed that he had settled all accounts. Money that ought to have gone toward some old debt goes for new shoes or clothes, when the old ones could have been mended and made to wear longer. These and many other things tend to cripple a preacher's influence and should be corrected. It is too bad that this brother who is so "big hearted," and has so many otherwise good qualities, should hurt his standing by such careless and inexcusable things.

"He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand, but the hand of the diligent maketh rich" (Prov. 10:4).

8. THE STINGY PREACHER

Here we have another illustration of lopsidedness. Brother Stingy is anything but extravagant. His features seem to bespeak shrewdness and littleness of soul. He carries the air of narrowness and niggardliness. Sometimes his family lacks nourishing food and warm clothing, but he can stand this more easily than he can break a bill. He is close and exacting to a penny when anything is coming his way. He can find a flimsy excuse to be absent when a special collection is to be taken for some worthy cause. Should he be present, he is reluctant about giving, and does so only for policy's sake. Sometimes he gets out of giving by helping to take up the collection. He is good at stirring up others to give. It is seldom one sees his name in a list of charity givers and never at the top. If he gives at all and the sums run over the amount called for, his stingy soul pines within him for having given so much. If he be an evangelist, he cannot rest easy until he knows that a certain amount is in sight. Or, if he be a pastor he becomes equally nervous lest the people be "overdrained."

This sad condition of soul may have started in early life when poverty compelled him to economize. But by diligence and frugality he got ahead and now it has become "second nature" to look ahead and figure how to make all he can and save all he can. Whatever is saved, begged, or sponged is just that much gained. He can put up a poor mouth and take money from a washerwoman when he knows that he has more hid away in his pockets or somewhere else than she possesses. As a rule, this "hidebound" preacher does not talk enthusiastically about tithing and is never first to propose helping some brother. He may plead his own poverty as the reason he cannot do more, but this simply reveals his true character, for we read, "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth: and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty."

"The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself" (Prov. 11:24, 25).

9. THE DECEITFUL PREACHER

It would seem that a genuine case of holiness ought to save a man from being easily biased and prejudiced against his brother. If so, we shall have to conclude that the preacher in question does not have it. It is unexplainable how he can weep, pray and preach powerful sermons, then step down from the pulpit and, in a mean, underhanded way, work against the brother with whom he smiled and chatted a few moments before. This big man (?) with a little soul has the gift and ability to fish around, stir up strife and "separate chief friends." He is an expert at the very thing God says He hates -- "Sowing discord among brethren." He is as dangerous as an adder and is likened to "a snake in the grass."

This so-called ambassador of Christ is not so considerate as an old whiskey-soaked, Free Mason judge, on the criminal bench, for the latter is supposed to be on the prisoner's side until he is conclusively proven guilty. Even then, the judge sometimes withholds sentence for days in order to carefully weigh the matter. Not so with this narrow-minded preacher. When he hears something on "good (?) authority," he does not know how to take a neutral position and reserve judgment until he hears the other side, for there are ALWAYS TWO SIDES. No! But he immediately passes sentence and says, "Just as I expected; I always felt suspicious." Sometimes he will spoil an entire sermon and bewilder or mortify a whole congregation slamming at and scolding one or two persons concerning whom he has heard something. Had he not been such a miserable coward he would have gone to the parties alone, according to direction (Matt. 18:15-17), and thus have won their confidence and respect, if not their souls. But he utterly fails and wonders why his rantings rebound and produce opposition. He tries to find comfort in the thought that he is persecuted for righteousness' sake, when it is for his own lack of love, wisdom and brotherly frankness.

"Take ye heed every one of his neighbor and trust ye not in any brother; for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbor will walk with slanders."

"And they will deceive every one his neighbor, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity" (Jer. 9:4, 5).

10. THE MAGNANIMOUS PREACHER

This list of preachers would hardly be complete without at least one exemplary character. The writer does not feel capable of describing such a one, but will try to give a rough outline.

Webster defines magnanimity as, "Greatness of mind; that elevation or dignity of soul which encounters danger and trouble with tranquillity and firmness; which raises the possessor above revenge and makes him delight in acts of benevolence; which makes him disdain injustice and meanness and prompts him to sacrifice personal ease, interest and safety for the accomplishment of useful and noble objects."

The magnanimous preacher is not only a godly man, but a manly man. Though he may not be so gifted as some, he makes up for it by his holiness and greatness of soul. He bears acquaintance and it is a pleasure to associate with him, especially after having been with his opposite -- Brother Palaver (Deceit). This good man is one out of a multitude who does not allow himself to be biased in the least by what he hears. He insists on waiting and hearing the other side. Here is one man out of ten thousand in whom you are safe in confiding and unbosoming your heart, for what you tell him will never be repeated without your knowledge or consent. He is not a "trucebreaker" (betrayal of secrets), hence cannot divulge a trust committed to his care.

This princely man has too much nobility to argue and contend over little matters. It is certainly sad to see grownup men and women contradict each other and use a multitude of words over some trivial, insignificant thing pertaining to the placing of furniture, the pitching of a tent, the correction of children, or a technicality relating to church matters. All this bespeaks shallowness of mind, narrowness of vision and littleness of soul.

This man of saintly dignity is not easily agitated or distracted. He does not give way to a heated imagination and make rash or cutting remarks. He is not quick to blame this one or that one for some petty loss or needless interruption, for he sees God back of everything. Instead of being affected by discouraging circumstances, he either surmounts them or turns them to his account, so that the devil is defeated and ashamed for having had anything to do with him.

Another characteristic of this great soul is that he has the ability to look ahead and see the outcome of a debate. If he foresees that it will produce friction or inward disunion on either side, he does not allow himself to be drawn into an argument. And if perchance he does, he quickly desists and lets the other party run off with the laurels (?) rather than contend and win out at the expense of grieving the Spirit. Few are big enough to do this.

Best of all, he is never offended at anything or anybody. He is too broad and busy to notice a slight or insult. He is running for a crown and cannot stop to answer the hiss of a slanderous tongue, or the growl of a backbiter. He has found the deep, uninterrupted "peace that passeth understanding" yea, misunderstanding. "Great peace have they that love Thy law and nothing shall offend them." Nothing! If he is noticed or unnoticed, praised or blamed, pushed forward or backward, nothing offends. Nothing makes him "feel hurt." Nothing gets him out of sorts, sore or sensitive. He never "sulks." Nothing can catch him off his guard or aggravate him. He is never fretted or irritated. He

quickly rises above disappointment, for he has learned how to spell it with an "H," and make it read His-Appointment. If cares multiply, he adds an extra "s" and makes them caress him. Like John Wesley, he can say, "I make no account of any profit or pleasure that does not bring me closer to God. And I shrink from no hardship or misunderstanding if thereby I will be more completely weaned from the things of time and sense and united to God." Again he says, "I have not lost a night's sleep in seventy years. Ten thousand cares are no more weight to my mind than ten thousand hairs to my head. I would as soon curse and swear as to fret or worry." Reader, is your vision enlarged by this picture? If not there is no hope for you. But if on the other hand your soul is stirred, then believe God to burn out of you all that ought to be eliminated and burn into you all He sees you need.

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

Chapter 10 **THE WEEPING PROPHET** **by E. E. Shelhamer and Others**

When we speak of soul travail or burden for the lost, many preachers do not know by experience what we mean. This is sad indeed and proof that such ministers have never, with David, felt the "pains of hell" over their own condition, much less over those around them.

"And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin, and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sins. And Moses returned unto the Lord and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin; and if not, blot me I pray thee out of Thy book which Thou hast written. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare Thy people, O Lord, and give not Thine heritage to reproach."

We quote from Rev. R. C. Horner, on the value and power of "Tears." Psalm 126:5, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."

"God has said, 'He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.'

"There is nothing that tells so much as the tears, in Christian work. You see a man praying, the tears rolling to the ground. See a man weeping over his children, until you would think his heart would break. You are moved looking at him. Everybody that sees it is moved, and to the extent that we are moved to pity and compassion for the people, they are moved toward God, but when your tears are dried up, the people may perish and die, and go to hell around you and you don't seem to know it.

"Every man who has religion is sowing in tears. He is reaping in joy. The man that does one does the other. God says so. You can get thawed out, and softened up, and your heart so melted that you feel you are running into liquid, and would melt away with sorrow for souls, with love and compassion for the lost ones.

"A young man got upon the platform to tell his experience. He laughed and cried, and cried and shouted and told that God had mercy on him, and that he wanted everybody to come. That would move anybody. it moved me. Oh, brother, it's the tears. It's the burden and the compassion about it, the tender feeling we have for the people. It's the sorrow we have because men are not saved. It's the heavy burden we feel, and we get no vent from it only by tears, and in active service, to 'rescue the perishing, and care for the dying, and snatch them in pity from sin and the grave.

"When you have the real flaming love of Jesus, you want everybody saved. You feel you could die for the people who are not saved."

"If all the people help you, you will have a revival. If nobody does, you will have a revival anyway."

The fruitfulness of prevailing prayer is illustrated by the following incident which was related to us while on the island of Ceylon.

A certain missionary in the interior of India became weary of toiling with scarcely any results, except the education of the heathen, so betook himself to earnest prayer. So great was his desire for the salvation of souls that he refused to eat even when his meals were brought to his room. Mail was left untouched and unopened which his wife laid beside him. His co-laborers, becoming alarmed at his actions, and somewhat displeased because his missionary work was left undone, wrote home to the board desiring his recall. The board was considering the complaint when another letter came, asking pardon and requesting that he remain -- that his prevailing prayer had accomplished more than the combined efforts of them all. The heathen came to the mission home day after day inquiring the way of salvation, but always asking for the "praying brother." This continued until the other workers began to feel slighted. The result of this brother's intercession was the conversion of over four hundred heathen. -- Mrs. E. E. S.

It is said of Wm. McDermott that "he used to spend whole nights in prayer with John Smith before those memorable seasons of revival, in which multitudes of sinners were won to Christ. In an agony of prayer with broken hearts and weeping eyes, and the pleading of faith, they wrestled with the Angel of the Covenant until they knew that they had taken hold of the strength of God. It was said of John Smith, that when he came downstairs in the morning, his eyes were sometimes well-nigh swollen up with weeping. He himself used to say that prayer need not have been so protracted if they had had stronger faith."

Fleming, in his Fulfillment of Scripture, mentions John Welsh, "who often in the coldest winter nights was found weeping on the ground, and wrestling with the Lord on account of his people, and saying to his wife when she pressed him for an explanation of his distress, 'O woman! I have the souls of three thousand to answer for, while I know not how it is with many of them.'"

Said Matthew Henry: "I would think it a greater happiness to gain one soul to Christ than mountains of silver and gold to myself. If I do not gain souls I shall enjoy all other gains with very little satisfaction, and would rather beg my bread from door to door than undertake this great work."

Doddridge, writing to a friend, remarked, "I long for the conversion of souls more sensibly than for anything besides. Methinks I could not only labor but die for it with pleasure."

When the attendants around the dying bed of David Stoner thought that his spirit had taken its flight, he raised himself up in bed and cried, "O Lord, save sinners! Save them by scores! Save them by hundreds! Save them by thousands!" And his work on earth was finished. The ruling passion was strong in death.

Two days before Ralph Waller's death he called his faithful wife to his side, and said: "I do not wish to boast, but at Liverpool and Boston I appropriated one hour each day to pray for souls, and frequently spent that time prostrate on my study floor; in addition to which, at Boston, I held something like night vigils, arising to pray each night at 12 o'clock. I do not say it to boast, but it appears plain to me that the secret of success in the conversion of souls is prayer."

Brainerd could say of himself on more than one occasion: "I cared not where or how I lived, or what hardships I went through, so that I could but gain souls to Christ. While I was asleep I dreamed of these things, and when I waked the first thing I thought of was this great work; all my desire was for the conversion of the heathen, and all my hope was in God."

"John Hunt possessed this master passion for souls. He left parents and country in the freshness and vigor of youth, with locks as yet black as a raven's wing, soon to become white and hoary with labor. His career was short but glorious. He crowded the work of a lifetime into ten short years. The fire of love within him burned itself, in spite of every obstruction, into the heart of the heathen, subduing the cruelties of cannibalism, and winning gospel triumphs the most distinguished in missionary enterprise. His heart was set on three things: 'The conversion of Fijians, the translation of the Scriptures, the revival of scriptural holiness.' John Hunt's prospect in death was unclouded brightness. He had safely committed his last treasures, his wife and children, in God's keeping. But there was something that hung about his heart more closely than these. That object to which all the energies of his great soul had been devoted was the last to be left. He was observed to weep, to keep on silently weeping. His emotion was increased, and he sobbed as though in acute distress. Then, when the pent-up feelings could no longer be withheld, he cried out, 'Lord, save Fiji.' This master passion of love for the souls of the Fijians had become identified with his very life." -- Remarkable Narratives, by A. Sims.

Charles G. Finney relates the following incident which magnifies the power of prayer:

"In a certain town there had been no revival for many years; the church was nearly run out, the youth were all unconverted and desolation reigned unbroken. There lived in a retired part of the town an aged man, a blacksmith by trade, and of so stammering a tongue that it was painful to hear him speak. On one Friday, as he was at work in his shop, alone, his mind became greatly exercised about the state of the church and of the impenitent. His agony became so great that he was induced to lay aside his work, lock the shop door and spend the afternoon in prayer.

"He prevailed, and on the Lord's day called on the minister and desired him to appoint a conference meeting. After some hesitation, the minister consented, observing, however, that he feared but few would attend. He appointed it the same evening at a large private house.

"The people gathered from far and near, doubtless to the surprise of the unbelieving and faint-hearted. A solemn sense of the presence of God seemed to oppress the assembly, and feelings too deep for speech were welling up in many hearts. All was silent for a time until one sinner broke out in tears and said if anyone could pray, he begged him to pray for him. Another followed and still another, until it was found that persons from every quarter of the town were under deep conviction. And what was remarkable was that they all dated their conviction at the hour when the old man was

praying in his shop. A powerful revival followed. Thus this old stammering man prevailed, and, as a prince, had power with God." -- Records of Prevailing Prayer

"The Rev. John Smith, a Wesleyan minister of England, who died in 1831, had a passion for souls which led him to do many strange things in the eyes of the world. It is said of him that one time during a Manchester conference, he accompanied, by invitation, some ministers into the suburbs to dine. While dinner was in progress Mr. Smith was observed to be reticent and prayerful; he had ascertained that a young lady present was unconverted. To Mr. Smith an unsaved soul was invested with no ordinary interest; its immediate value, its unending duration, its purchase by the blood of Christ, its capacity of endless happiness. its danger of eternal woe, and a lost opportunity which can never be recalled, impressed him. Before the ministers returned to conference there was only time for one of two things -- a dessert, or prayer. Mr. Smith asked the ministers to forego the former, and unite with him in prayer for the conversion of the young lady.

"The young lady became very angry and said that Mr. Smith had singled her out for an onslaught, that was both unchristian and ungentlemanly. Yet, the next morning found her saved and ready for the Master's work. For six weeks she worked faithfully for God, and was used in His hands in the salvation of many souls. Then she was taken with a fever, and in a state of unconsciousness passed home to glory.

"Constant communion with God was the foundation of Mr. Smith's great usefulness. In this he was surpassed by none of any age. Whole nights were often given up to prayer, and always, when in anything like moderate health -- often, too, when wasted by painful disease -- he arose at four o'clock in the morning and throwing himself before the mercy seat, for three hours wrestled with God in mighty prayer. In the coldest winter morning he could be heard at that hour with suppressed voice pleading with God while his groans have revealed the intensity of his feelings. Immediately after breakfast and family worship he would again retire with his Bible into his study and spend until near noon in the same hallowed employment. Here, unquestionably, was the great secret of his power in public prayer and preaching -- the Lord, who seeth in secret, rewarding him openly. Every sermon was thus sanctified by prayer.

"On one occasion, when at a country appointment, the time for commencing the service had elapsed and Mr. Smith did not make his appearance. He had left the house where he was a guest about half an hour before, after being some time in his closet. At length he was found in an adjoining barn, wrestling in prayer for a blessing upon the approaching service, having retired thither that, unobserved, he might pour out his full soul before his heavenly Father. He arose, briefly expressed his regret at not having observed the lapse of time, and on the way to the chapel relapsed into silent prayer.

"During the sermon that evening the fervent prayer of the righteous man proved effectual. The Spirit of God descended upon the congregation; the deep attentive silence observed at the commencement of the discourse was soon interrupted by sobs and moans and these ere long were followed by loud and piercing cries for mercy, as one after another the hearers were pricked to the heart and the strongholds of Satan were beaten down until so universal was the cry of the broken-hearted that Mr. Smith found it necessary to desist from preaching and descend into the altar.

The meeting was continued until midnight. Mr. Smith was the last to retire from the scene of the Redeemer's triumphs." -- Sketches of Wesleyan Preachers

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

Chapter 11 **UNCTIONLESS PREACHERS** by E. E. Shelhamer and Others

"Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

In the preceding pages we have tried to discover why some preachers fail. - One is "lazy," another "worldly," another "envious" and others are "unwise."

But now we come to another class, who are not guilty in any of these respects. They are studious, sound in doctrine, and exemplary in life. Why then are they not a success? Why are they not in great demand? The answer is, Lack of Holy Unction -- lack of power from on High. It seems too bad that so many good men, who are capable of filling important positions, content themselves in preaching to a score or two of people and a lot of empty seats, when they might as well be having a lively interest and bringing many souls to Christ. Oh, brethren, let us not be content to be "circuit riders;" let us not be satisfied to "hold our own," or perhaps go a little further and report a "few accessions." Let us go in for a mighty, divine anointing upon our own hearts, then never rest until we see an outpouring of the Spirit upon our people.

"A young man rises in the pulpit. You see nothing engaging in his person, nothing musical in his voice, nothing winning in his manner. He has no reputation for genius or learning or wisdom; no illustrious ancestry, or secular sources of influence or authority. He speaks; but when you come to analyze his speech, you find neither logical ability nor rhetorical charms in it; indeed, it may be wanting in connection, and void of new thought; yet all listen with eager interest. The guilty is sobered; the worldling feels that he is a fool; the sinner shudders as if brought to the mouth of hell; the saint resolves to live a better life; the minister who has preached for fame, turns pale; and the whole crowd trembles as in the presence of God. What is the cause? We call it Unction. The man has been in his closet, has wrestled with God, and prevailed. He has received his commission anew, and had a fresh Anointing from the Holy One. He did not tell you this, but you found it out; you detected the odor of the Divine Ointment, as the smell of a field that the Lord has blessed; and therefore his words went forth into your heart with power as the words of God."

The following is a brief account by A. M. Hills of Charles G. Finney's conversion and subsequent baptism with the Holy Ghost:

"A quarter of a mile in the woods he crept into a covert where great trees had fallen across each other, making a closet for him. He had thought that if he could but be alone, he might pray freely and not be overheard! But lo! when he came to try, he was dumb; he had nothing to say to God., He found himself fast verging to despair, and he Cried, "My heart is dead to God, and will not pray!"

"He thought several times he had heard a noise, and he stopped to listen and see if any one was overhearing him. Then and there the senseless, wicked pride of his heart was revealed to him. An overwhelming sense of the wickedness of being ashamed to have a human being see me on my knees before God took powerful possession of me. The sin appeared awful, infinite! 'What!' I said, 'such a degraded sinner as I am, on my knees, confessing my sins to a great and holy God, and ashamed to have any human being, and a sinner like myself, find me on my knees, endeavoring to make my peace with an offended God. It broke me down before the Lord. I cried at the top of my voice that I would not leave that place if all the men on earth and all the devils in hell surrounded me.' Then his heart was melted, and his tongue was loosed, and he could pray.

"The Spirit brought a promise to his mind: 'Then shall ye go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you. Then shall ye seek Me and find Me when ye shall search for Me with all your heart.' He seized upon the heavenly promise with the grasp of a drowning man, and cried, 'Lord, I take Thee at Thy word!'

"He continued thus to pray and appropriate promises for a long time, until he found himself tripping through the bushes on the way to the road, and saying, 'If ever I am converted, I will preach the gospel.' In his ignorance he did not realize that peace with God had come, and he was already converted. He reached the village, and found that it was noon. He had spent the whole forenoon with God. Such a wonderful quiet and peace had come to his soul; all sense of sin and all consciousness of guilt had so completely departed, and his repose of mind was so unspeakably great that he thought he must have grieved the Holy Spirit entirely away. But no burden came back. And when, after dinner, he took down his bass-viol and began to sing a sacred hymn, his whole heart melted before God, and he began to weep.

"And now began the spiritual wonders of this wonderful life. Night came on. Squire Wright bade him good-night, and went home. He built a fire in the front room of his office, and went to the back room to pray. He says:

"There was neither light nor fire in the room; nevertheless it suddenly appeared perfectly light. As I went in and shut the door after me, it seems as if I met the Lord Jesus Christ face to face. It did not occur to me at the time, nor for some time afterward, that it was wholly a mental state. I have always since regarded this as a most remarkable state of mind; for it seemed to me a reality that He stood before me, and I fell down at His feet and poured out my soul to Him. I wept aloud like a child, and made such confessions as I could with my choked utterance. It seemed to me that I bathed His feet with my tears. I must have continued in that state a good while, absorbed with the interview. I returned to the front office, and found that the fire I had made of large wood was nearly burned out. But as I turned and was about to take a seat by the fire, I received a mighty baptism with the Holy Ghost. Without any expectation of it, without ever having the thought in my mind that there was any such thing for me, without any recollection that I had ever heard the thing mentioned by any person in the world, the Holy Spirit descended upon me in a manner that seemed to go through me, body and soul. I could feel the impression like a wave of electricity going through and through me. Indeed, it seemed to come in waves and waves of liquid love. It seemed like the very breath of God.

"No words can express the wonderful love that was shed abroad in my heart. I wept aloud with joy and love; and I do not know but I should say I literally bellowed out the unutterable gushings of my heart. These waves came over me and over me, and over me, until I cried out: 'I shall die if these waves continue to pass over me. Lord, I cannot bear any more!'"

"I question if there is a parallel to this in all the literature of the saints -- a man receiving such a baptism with the Spirit so soon after conversion, without asking for it or expecting it, and when he was too utterly ignorant of the whole subject to even think about it. In this instance God seems to have stepped beyond the bounds of His ordinary method of conferring the great gift. Finney was the instrument God wanted, and He used His sovereign right to deal with him spiritually after an unusual manner, and equip him at once for a matchless service.

"A member of the choir came into the office late that Wednesday evening, after the Spirit came, and he found Finney weeping aloud, and said: 'Mr. Finney, what ails you? Are you in pain?' 'No, but so happy that I cannot live. He hurried out, and brought in an elder of the church, to whom Finney began to tell his experience. Another man, who was preparing for college, stepped into the office, and was listening, when, suddenly, he fell to the floor, and cried out in the greatest agony of mind, 'Do pray for me!' and he was soon converted. The next morning, when Squire Wright came into the office, Finney said a few words to him about his soul. He dropped his head, stood in silence a moment, and left the office. The words of the young convert, Spirit-filled, had pierced him like a sword, and he did not get over it until he was converted. Finney started out to talk with anybody he chanced to meet. He entered the shop of a pious shoemaker, and found there a young man, son of an elder of the church, defending Universalism. The Lord at once gave Finney an answer to his arguments. He rose up in silence, left the shop, and broke for the woods, and there gave himself to God. He spoke to many others that day, and the Spirit drove the message home, and every one was converted. In the evening he sat down to the tea table, and was requested to ask the blessing. There were present at the table with the Christians an unconverted young woman and a young man who was a professed Universalist and a whisky distiller. He had scarcely begun when their spiritual condition so excited his compassion that he began to weep. They sat in silence a moment, when the young distiller rushed from the table, and locked himself in his room; and he was not seen again until he came out a Christian the next morning. He afterward became an able minister of the gospel."

Speaking of the fiery baptism, Vivian A. Dake says:

"Hot shot will burn its way through barriers that cold shot batters against in vain. It is fire added to powder. So God says He will baptize us with the Holy Ghost and fire. The fire of the Holy Ghost will make us veritable hot shot.

"Why do so many of our preachers make so few breaches in the walls of sin, although they seemingly smite so powerfully? They are cold shot. Once they had the fire, but they have lost it.

"In the Holiness Movement there are many who could strike mighty blows if they had the fire to burn through the barriers. 'Refining fire,' we need it. Bishops, editors, district elders, preachers and people need this Pentecost power. The power is leaking out. Many of our conferences are at a standstill. Some are on the down grade, and all for the want of the fire.

"How many are wondering why they do not succeed! 'Why,' they say, 'I am zealous, I preach the truth clearly and forcibly. What is the matter?' Wonder no longer. You have lost the fire. When the French and Spanish ships besieged Gibraltar in the eighteenth century, they covered their ships with green oxhides. The old cannon balls of the English bounded harmlessly off. The garrison was at the point of starvation, and capitulation was only a question of time. One day an English artilleryman bethought himself of heating a cannon ball. The red-hot missile, roaring as it went, struck and burned its way through, setting fire to the ship. Soon the English cannon began to vomit out the red-hot storm. The fleet was soon in flames, and the remnant were only too glad to get out of reach of the fire.

"Here is the secret: heat your shot red-hot, that is, get red-hot yourself, so that you can send forth the burning truth. Like the blacksmith's iron in the fire and fire in the iron, so must you have the Holy Ghost and fire in you and you in the fire. The green oxhides of formalism and sin will be pierced through, and the souls of men left naked and open to the truth. The fire comes in when carnality goes out. Hallelujah!

"I have struck this line. I have died the death to carnality, and it is fire all the time."

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

Chapter 12 **SUPERFICIAL ALTAR WORKERS** **by E. E. Shelhamer**

"For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.

And now we come to still another class of preachers and -Christian workers. This class are not only "sound in doctrine," and "exemplary in life," but they minister in the Spirit and preach with unction and power. Nevertheless, there is somewhat against them; they fail at a vital point; they "heal slightly)" and the result is a lot of reformed sinners professing religion, and others professing holiness who are worldly and powerless and know nothing about crucifixion.

It is surprising how some holiness preachers and evangelists can preach good and straight and then upset the whole thing by skimming over and being so superficial in altar work.

Until preachers and Christian workers discriminate between the Spirit encouraging seeking souls, and that same Spirit coming into their hearts, bringing the clear, unmistakable witness to their acceptance with God, just so long they will do shallow altar work. There is a vast difference between the Spirit coming upon a person from without, and taking up His abode within. God will draw near to every soul as fast as he submits and surrenders; this encouragement of the Spirit, along with the anticipation of being saved and prepared for glory, may be so great at times as to cause the seeker to shout aloud for joy, and yet with all this he may not have a satisfactory assurance that all is right between him and his God.

Every truly repentant soul will have the witness of his own spirit to the fact that he has yielded on every point revealed to him, and this will bring a sense of relief, but this is not enough, unless the Holy Spirit comes in) witnessing that he is made "partaker of the divine nature." Because of unwise dealing, thousands of souls stop short with the witness of their own spirit, and this accounts for so many barren, joyless professors of religion.

In nine cases out of ten, the seeker has wrongs to make right, is clinging to some idol or besetting sin, or rebelling on some other point, and even though he does say he is given up in every respect, the very fact that God does not set His seal to it proves that his heart is still "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." That is why souls should not be rushed through and urged to "believe," "believe," right over unconfessed, unrepented sins. How can they believe until they meet the conditions of faith? If souls were left to pray their way through, the Holy Spirit would lead them step by step to glorious victory.

While there is no virtue in length of time, yet it is impracticable to think that every person who submits to a proposition and goes forward for prayers, can and must of necessity profess what he is

seeking, the first time he goes forward. True, God can save or sanctify in a moment of time, but the seeking soul must approach the point of appropriating faith, step by step. We have heard ministers tell what a time they had seeking salvation, also what dying out they had when they were sanctified. But they lay, "You need not have such a hard and long time, since you have the benefit of our experience and advanced light." The same brother goes on to say that if he had had some one to teach him the simplicity of faith, he would not have had such a long struggle. He seems to think that the soul who is groping in the dark, feeling after God, should immediately see and understand things as he does and in urging this he seems to utterly forget that every soul must learn the same lessons and travel over the same road. Every soul must get to the end of himself before he finds God. Of course some souls reach the point of victory more quickly than others, but as a rule, this is because such souls comprehend the conditions of faith more readily and submit and surrender more fully. But the lessons must be learned and the determination tested, either before or after victory ground has been gained. God can trust some before, while others must prove their integrity. As Fletcher say, "The deeper the repentance, the more solid and lasting the victory."

This same principle holds good in dealing with those seeking heart purity. It is misleading and unscriptural to hold that souls who have not been previously groaning for heart purity can come forward from a promiscuous congregation and seek and obtain such an experience in a few minutes. Wesley taught that it was necessary to see the "groundwork of the heart, the depths of pride, self-will and hell." Adam Clarke says, "Few are cleansed from all sin or sanctified because they do not feel and confess their own sore and the plague of their own hearts." Fletcher says, "By frequent and deep confession drag out all these abominations," etc.

Now the question is, how can a soul who has not yet seen the "groundwork of his heart," or "by frequent and deep confession" denounced and loathed the "envy, jealousy, fretfulness, anger, pride, impatience, peevishness, formality, sloth, prejudice, bigotry, carnal confidence, evil shame, self-righteousness, tormenting fears, uncharitable suspicions, idolatrous love," etc., etc., how can such a soul get an experience at a single altar service? True, God is able and does do His part instantaneously, in striking the death blow to the "old man" and applying the blood, but not until the conditions to such appropriating faith are met, and it is misleading as well as unscriptural to urge souls to try to exercise that faith over unconfessed carnality.

Rev. F. D. Brooke says: "The efforts of some well-meaning persons to get seekers for holiness to consecrate have proven hindrances rather than helps to them in obtaining the experience. A man comes to the altar seeking holiness. He has been a happy, shining pilgrim. There is not an issue between his soul and God relative to future conduct. He has been blest time and again during his Christian experience as he would rededicate his soul and body's powers to God forever to live and die for Him. Now some one tells him to consecrate. He is all broken up over his burden of inward defilement. He is anxious to do anything to obtain deliverance. He goes through a careful dedication of himself to God, his friend altar worker suggesting some things which may not have occurred to his mind before. His mind is diverted from his difficulty. He feels a sensation of peace in his soul, as any one will who rededicates himself to God, whether he is regenerated or wholly sanctified. He accepts this as holiness, and soon awakens to the fact that he was deceived, by allowing his mind to be diverted from the object for which he came to the altar, which was not to reconsecrate, but to be made pure."

We have been pained to see altar workers compel a poor seeker to insist (against his own consciousness) that the work is done, and then to make the lie more secure, he is told never to doubt nor to depend so much upon feeling. He is urged to "take it by faith" and say it is done anyway and the witness and the feeling will come later.

Should the seeker get wonderfully blest the belief is then confirmed by all that it is a very clear case of sanctification. The tide and sentiment are so strong in favor of the seeker's having it, that should an eagle-eyed soul be present and not join in the shout, but rather be pained to see such shallow work, he is at once looked upon as being stubborn or jealous. This is where a faithful worker is lynched (spiritually) by his brethren. But he takes it gently rather than be accessory in healing the hurt of the daughter of Zion "slightly."

We once heard a backslidden presiding elder say he attended a meeting where one of the leading holiness evangelists in the land was in charge. The backslider went forward to get help in his soul, but after asking him a few questions the evangelist said, "You're all right! The Spirit reveals to me that all you need, is to brace up and go to work." This ex-preacher declared he was backslidden and living in open sin at the very time.

Now there is a reason for all superficial dealing with souls.

As a rule every one tells and teaches his own experience. At least he does not go higher or deeper than he himself has gone. When you hear a person instruct another and he tells the seeker to "make a full, unconditional surrender," "consecrate everything to God for time and eternity," etc., you can safely set it down that he knows nothing by experience of real death to self.

If a man is void of the genuine experience himself, no difference how radical he may be in his teachings or practice, his lack will be made manifest in his personal dealing with souls.

Deep spirituality is accompanied by keen discernment. There is no better sign that a person is void of the experience of holiness than that of not being able to detect shallowness and lack of power wherever it is manifest. Carnality is blinding and renders its subjects "like other men."

Not that we should sit in judgment upon other's experiences, and look for defects. No! Perfect love will hope for the best in every person. But it will also enable its possessor to detect in an instant that which is tainted with carnal self, whether it be in prayer, testimony, preaching or conversation.

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

Chapter 13 THE SENTIMENTAL PREACHER

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"Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." (2 Cor. 5:16.)

Every grace of the Spirit can be and has been counterfeited. Hence there is much that passes for gentleness that is nothing more or less than religious softness. It is what Wesley denominates being "smooth to an excess so as scarcely to avoid a degree of fawning, or of seeming to mean what they do not. To avoid roughness they lean to the other extreme." Many public speakers and Christian workers have so cultivated affectation that they can shed tears at will, and give to the voice such a pathetic tremor that those who lack discernment are likewise affected, and hence pronounce them very spiritual.

To this class of ministers we beg leave to speak a few words in an humble, unassuming manner.

1. The above named minister has about him a streak of sentimentality. This is evidenced by his attitude to God in worship. His expressions of praise sound affected. One feels ashamed to look him in the eye while he is speaking, for he is so self-conscious that we wonder if he is perfectly sincere. Instead of giving us a broad, heartfelt "Hallelujah," he primps his mouth and says, "Hullelujah," or "Praise the Dear Lawd."

2. This soft brother always manages to keep set" in sight. If he does not happen to be overly precise, he is loud and irreverent. He does not "stand in awe" or "rejoice with trembling." Every one sees him instead of Jesus. He frequently gets ahead of the Spirit in praise or exhortation, and thus keeps himself depleted of reserve force. His ministrations would have a better effect were he to wait until surcharged by divine power before speaking. His life is not "hid with Christ." He is very sociable and talkative, loves to be in company, dwells on the surface, likes good dinners, is religiously boisterous and leads if not monopolizes the table conversation.

He usually makes himself very conspicuous in gospel services: speaks every time there is half a chance, and prays whether led by the Spirit or not. He likes to find a prominent seat where he can be conspicuous, even if it is not quite so comfortable as a more obscure one. Usually his wife sits back in the congregation with the babies. He could rest more comfortably in the vacant seat beside her, and might be able to relieve her of one of the children, but he would rather yell "amen" from a more prominent corner. His emotions are easily stirred. He likes sentimental music, seldom gets blest over those deep, old-fashioned hymns which contain so much solid truth and inspiration.

3. This same brother lives so in his emotions that he quickly gives up when sick, and often has poor spells when at some public gathering. At such times he requires considerable nursing and

attention. He craves sympathy and has a way of mentioning his ailments to every one until the news gets out that he is very bad off. Everybody is very much concerned and people seem greatly solicitous for him.

If an opportunity is given him to preach, he is delighted and would be greatly disappointed inwardly were he not asked, though outwardly he affects that it is a great sacrifice for him to do so. He slowly enters the stand and in a weak voice announces the fact that he is not able to be there; that most people would be in bed "right now" if they were half as sick as he, but he asks the people of God to hold him up with their prayers. After the meeting, friends crowd around, each asking how he feels and prescribing a "sure cure."

After dinner this sentimentalist situates himself upon a cot in the shade where he will be able to receive and digest all the sympathy that comes his way. Thus he invites the devil to tempt him by giving all the sympathetic women a chance to honey around and give words of condolence. If a lady doctor or a trained nurse happens to be on the ground she is called. This gives him a chance to have his pulse felt or his head rubbed. Soft women flatter his preaching and tell him how much good his ministrations have done them.

We once entertained a minister of this stamp. He came in one night after service saying he had a "high fever." As the writer had charge of the home and there were no men present, it fell to her lot to ask if there was anything she could do for him. But he declined all remedies, fell back in a chair and asked in a plaintive voice if the writer did not think his pulse was too quick! Leaving him to decide that matter for himself, she started out of the room saying emphatically that she did not think he had very much fever.

4. In altar work this brother loves to hold the hand of a lady penitent while he speaks low and coaxingly to her in tones which suggest those of a lover wooing a bride, rather than a man dealing with eternal realities. How many valuable men and women have fallen, those whom we trusted as our own hearts! They did not fall suddenly but for years paved the way by little careless acts and in this way they have dug their own graves. An angel could fall if he invited temptation as do some. Though the motive and the heart may in the main be right, yet these little inlets to temptation prevent God from pledging Himself to keep one, for He expects man to keep himself, up to a certain point.

The need of the hour then is men, manly men, men of purity and of strength of character, who can stand bullets, jails, flattery, softness and the pressure of sentimentality. Lord, give us a multitude of such men!

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

Chapter 14 **SPIRITUAL POWER AND HOW LOST** **by E. E. Shelhamer and Others**

We do not mean physical or intellectual power, nor power to pray, exhort or preach eloquently. All of this can be mere human power. We mean Holy Ghost power -- dynamite -- for the words "power" and "dynamite" came from the same Greek word. Jesus certainly meant something when He said: "Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you.

Dear Brother: Have you received, and do you now possess this power, this unction from "on high"? Power to wrestle and prevail with God? Power to pray such conviction on souls that they tremble, turn pale, and lose sleep and appetite? Power not only to get them to the altar, but to lead them through? Power that makes you either a terror or a blessing to the workers of iniquity? Power not only to "stir the devil" but power to cast him out.

Have you this power? If not, there is a reason, for God wants you to have it. Do you wonder why you lack power when you seldom, if ever, stay more than thirty minutes alone with God? This unction will create such an intense yearning for the lost, the love of communion with God, that one hour in secret will seem but a short time. Do you wonder why you lack power with God and men, when you rarely, if ever, fast and practice real self-denial? This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting. Do you wonder why you cannot prevail for souls, when you are so familiar with those of the opposite sex? Do you wonder why you lack the mighty unction and then indulge yourself eating, sleeping, etc.? Are not your "prayers hindered" many times because of your fleshly indulgences?

You will get just what you live for. If your prayers, sermons and personal efforts are dry and ineffective, what you need is an explosion of Holy Ghost dynamite; then you will not need to try to get blest and have a free time. Then you will not need to preach to empty seats half of the time. You will be on hand to visit saloons and public places, distribute tracts, visit and pray from house to house, and, as a result, you will have a revival the whole year round. Hallelujah!

Several things are necessary to make you a soul winner and idol smasher wherever you go. Get the light on your heart; die the death to carnality and "tarry till ye be endued with power from on high." It will pay.

AND HOW LOST

Rev. R. A. Torrey says:

"Power is lost through self-indulgence. The one who would have God's power must lead a life of self-denial. There are many things which are not sinful in the ordinary understanding of the word sin,

but which hinder spirituality and rob men of power. I do not believe that any man can lead a luxurious life, over-indulge his natural appetites, indulge extensively in dainties, and enjoy the fulness of God's power. The gratification of the flesh and the fulness of the Spirit do not go hand in hand. 'The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these two are contrary the one to the other' (Gal. 5:17). Paul wrote, 'I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection.' 1 Cor. 11:27, (see R. V.) Note also Eph. 5:18

"We live in a day when the temptation of the indulgence of the flesh is very great. Luxuries are common. Piety and prosperity seldom go hand in hand, and in many a case the prosperity that piety and power have brought has been the ruin of the man to whom it has come. Not a few ministers of power have become popular and in demand. With the increasing popularity has come an increase of pay and of the comforts of life. Luxurious living has come in, and the power of the Spirit has gone out. It would not be difficult to cite specific instances of this. If we would know the continuance of the Spirit's power we need to be on guard to lead lives of simplicity, free from indulgence and surfeiting, be ready to 'endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ' (2 Tim. 2:3). I frankly confess I am afraid of luxury; not as afraid of it as I am of sin, but it comes next as an object of dread. It is a very subtle, but a very potent enemy of power. There are devils today that 'go not out but by prayer and fasting.' "

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

Chapter 15 **PREVAILING PRAYER AND ITS REWARDS** **by E. E. Shelhamer and Others**

"When God inclines the heart to pray,
He hath an ear to hear."

Who can tell the outcome of a prolonged season of wrestling with God in prayer? We should court and invite such seasons, rather than neglect or relegate them to a more convenient time. God knows His business and generally draws the soul out in prayer, either to bring about some glorious end, or to frustrate some hellish design. The devil knows this and will enlist feebleness, interruptions, wandering thoughts, perplexing cares and a multitude of other things to sidetrack the prevailer from persistently following the line of thought upon which God is pleased to answer. But everything must stand aside! More than millions are at stake! No small victory is sufficient, when God is anxious "to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." There is this double advantage in taking time to "pray through." Though the soul may hardly be able to say definitely what special answer has been given, yet sometimes one season of getting through to God may embrace and cover a number of things, some of which are more important than the one particular thing that rested upon the mind while in prayer.

We here give the result of one season of Prevailing Prayer, by Charles G. Finney, while on shipboard:

"My soul was in utter agony. I spent the entire day in prayer in my stateroom, or walking the deck in intense agony. In fact, I felt crushed with the burden that was on my soul. There was no one on board to whom I could open my mind or say a word. It was the spirit of prayer that was upon me; that which I had often experienced in kind, but perhaps never before to such a degree, for so long a time. I besought the Lord to go on with His work, and to provide Himself with such instrumentalities as were necessary. It was a long summer day in the early part of July. After a day of unspeakable wrestling and agony of soul, just at midnight the subject cleared up to my mind. The Spirit led me to believe that all would come out right, and that God had yet a work for me to do; that I might be at rest; that the Lord would go forward with His work, and give me the strength to take any part in it that He desired. But I had not the least idea what course His providence would take."

That agony of prayer on the ship, and the following prayer in New York, probably led to the most effective work for the kingdom of Christ that Finney ever did. After a day or two, Finney proposed to deliver a series of lectures on revivals. He began the course of lectures immediately, and continued them through the whole winter, preaching one each week. The lectures were wholly extemporaneous, and averaged about one hour and three quarters in length.

Finney wrote: "These lectures were afterwards published in a book and called 'Finney's Lectures on Revivals.' Twelve thousand copies of them were sold as fast as they could be printed; and here, for the glory of Christ, I would say that they have been reprinted in England and France; they were translated into Welsh, and on the Continent were translated into French and German, and were extensively circulated throughout Europe and the colonies of Great Britain. They were, I presume, to be found wherever the English language was spoken. After they had been printed in Welsh, the Congregational ministers of the Principality of Wales, at one of their public meetings, appointed a committee to inform me of the great revival that had resulted from the translation of those lectures into the Welsh language. This they did by letter. One publisher in London informed me that his father had published eighty thousand volumes of them. These revival lectures, meager as was the report of them, and feeble as they were in themselves, have been instrumental, as I have learned, in promoting revivals in England and Scotland and Wales, on the Continent, in Canada, in Nova Scotia, all over the United States, and in the islands of the sea.

"But this was not of man's wisdom. Let the reader remember that long day of agony and prayer at sea that God would do something to forward the work of revivals, and enable me, if He desired to do it, to take such a course as to help forward the work. I felt certain that my prayers would be answered, and I have regarded all that I have since been able to accomplish as, in a very important sense, an answer to the prayers of that day. The spirit of prayer came upon me as a sovereign grace bestowed on me, without the least merit. He pressed my soul in prayer until I was enabled to prevail, and through infinite riches in grace in Christ Jesus I have been many years witnessing the wonderful results of that day of wrestling with God. In answer to that day's agony He has continued to give me the spirit of prayer."

Bishop C. H. Fowler says:

"We know of a preacher, still living, who was appointed to the charge of a church in Springfield, Ill. The church seemed very much depressed. Its life was at a low ebb. It was in the midst of the harvest in the hot weather when things seemed most depressed. The pastor, a holy man of God, announced on Sabbath evening to a small congregation of a score or two of persons, 'There will be a prayer meeting in this church tomorrow morning at sunrise for a revival of the work of God and for the conversion of sinners.' The people wondered at the notice and went home. The pastor went up into his study which was in the parsonage by the side of the church and gave that night to prayer. Just as the east began to lighten up a little with the coming day he had the assurance that his prayer was answered and cast himself down on a sofa for a little rest.

"Presently he awoke suddenly to see the sun shining on the wall over his head. He sprang up and looked out of the window to see how late it was when he saw the sun just rising above the horizon. Looking down into the yard by the church, he was overjoyed to see the church crowded with people and the yard full and teams crowding into the street for a long distance. God had heard his prayer and had sent out His Spirit into the community and there had been no sleeping in Springfield that night. People in the country who knew nothing of the appointment got up in the night and drove into town and to the church to find out what the matter was. A good man had taken hold of God. The prayer meeting began and was closed that night at 11 o'clock. Several souls were converted. A gracious work broke out and the community was greatly blessed. The foregoing we certify to on the highest

authority, having it from the lips of the man himself, whom everybody knowing him believes as soon as anything outside the Bible. We greatly need earnest, persevering, believing prayer. One night of such prayer kept by all the church would startle the nation."

"In 1868 Mrs. Maggie Newton Van Cott held a revival meeting at Stone Ridge, Ulster County, N. Y. At the opening of the meeting she announced, under the gracious influence of the Spirit, as she believed, that there would be a glorious revival and that two hundred souls would be converted. Some were shocked at the prediction and some of the very best people in the church were grieved for they felt certain that she was doomed to disappointment. She labored for more than a week with little fruit. Her strength began to give way. Her warmest co-workers began to tremble for her. One morning she remarked to the lady at whose residence she was staying, 'I am going into the parlor to settle this church matter with the dear Master. Please do not allow anyone to come near me. If I do not come out in time for dinner, do not call me. If I am not with you in time for the afternoon meeting, you may call in the friends. I shall, in the name of God, this day have victory or death.'

"It was a bitter cold day in February and no fire had been kindled in that room all winter and the frost was thick on the window panes. She wrapped a large shawl around her and bowed before God and presented the promises covered with the blood of the Savior; and in them there could be no failure. 'Ask, and you shall receive,' stood before her as in the characters of living fire. Also, "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you.' 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.' An hour passed -- another followed -- she had grappled in with God's Word and in the anguish of her spirit, as she afterward declared, she could in a certain degree understand the Scripture where it describes the Master's agony in the garden where He sweat great drops of blood. In those hours of the most intense struggle of spirit, the great drops of sweat rolled from her brow. The tempter suggested: 'Give it up, God will not give the answer today.'

"'Then today, on this spot, I die,' was her answer. The agony increased. The prayer became a struggle for life. 'I will not let Thee go. Thy Word is truth. Thou hast said, Now is the time, O God, now send the answer; now, my Father, hear me for the sake of souls -- for the two hundred. Christ has paid the price of their redemption. I plead His merits -- I will not let go my hold -- Thou canst not turn me away. Behold Thine own dear Son pleads -- the Spirit intercedes. Give, oh, give the answer.' That moment a sweet ripple of peace floated over her soul and soon shouts of rapture flooded her spirit. That night twenty seekers bowed at the altar of prayer. In less than five weeks two hundred and thirty-five persons professed faith in Christ.

"Prayer has divided seas, rolled up flowing rivers, made flinty rocks gush forth into fountains, quenched flames of fire, muzzled lions, disarmed vipers and poisons, marshaled the stars against the wicked, stopped the course of the moon, arrested the rapid sun in its great race, burst open iron gates, recalled souls from eternity, conquered the strongest devils, commanded legions of angels down from heaven. Prayer has bridled and changed the raging passions of man, and destroyed vast armies of proud, daring, blustering atheists. Prayer has brought one man from the bottom of the sea, and carried another in a chariot of fire to heaven; and what has not prayer done? LET US PRAY."

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

Chapter 16 **ADVICE TO A YOUNG PREACHER** **by William Bramwell**

"My dear Brother: I saw your mother this morning who desired I would write to you. I understand that you are quite satisfied you are in your place; I mean as a traveling preacher -- a work which makes me, even to the present time, tremble in the presence of God. I am still persuaded that nothing can support us but that almighty power which raised the Lord Jesus from the dead.

"Yet it is quite possible for you and me to make this a worldly business; that it may become so formal as to create in us no more concern than any common business in life.

"Shall the Lord ordain us to this heavenly calling? Shall He empower us with the spirit and zeal of power? Shall He send us forth into this labor to save sinners from everlasting damnation? And shall we after all lose the true spirit of our calling? How can we give in our account?

"Consider this, my dear brother, and strictly examine yourself. Do you rise about four o'clock every morning? In order to do this, do you retire to rest as soon as your work and eating are over? Or do you sit and chat with the people? Do you give yourself to reading and prayer? I say GIVE, give yourself to these. Are you never in company above an hour at once? And when in company do you turn all into profit, into religion? Are you a man of God in spirit, in word, in deed? Do you feel a clear witness of entire sanctification -- the cleansing blood? And do you declare this and walk in it? I want you also to be a preacher. And, in order to this, would it not be well to read the Scriptures without comment, find out the breadth and length, depth and height, by digging, prayer and receiving light from God? Whoever depends on comments will be very superficial, and will never speak with proper confidence. You may sometimes examine a comment after your own labor, to see what difference, etc., but never before it. Write something every day; have a book for the purpose; and never lose one idea which the Lord in mercy gives you. In preaching never be tedious; the world never did and never will bear that which is tedious. Let your introduction be a short opening to your sermon. An introduction is to prepare the people to receive what you have to say. Let your sermon be clear and strong, reaching every heart. 'Save thyself and them that hear thee.'

"If you have no end in view but the bringing of souls to God, this will cure almost everything. Strive to bring some home in every sermon. God will be with you and He will bless you. He will give you the desire of your heart. Be neat and clean in all your clothes; never foppish or fine. Have everything consistent with your Lord Jesus. Set Him before you at all times. Never be ceremonious; yet learn a good address. Be courteous, be kind, never light or trifling. Oh, my brother, live for eternity; the Lord is at hand. Be ready every moment for glory; ever as willing to leave this earth as to go to sleep. Pray, pray, pray, and never cease. I am yours affectionately."

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

Chapter 17 **THE PREACHER AND HIS CHOIR** **by Adam Clarke**

If any minister is puzzled to know what to do with a proud organist and a worldly choir, it might be well for him to adopt Adam Clarke's method of dealing with them. We quote from his "Life."

"The society at Dock, built a new chapel at Windmill Hill, much more commodious than that which they had opposite the Gun-Wharf Gate; but so much had the congregations increased that this new erection was soon found to be too small. When the seats of this chapel were in course of being let, he noticed for the first time, what he had occasion to notice with pain often after: How difficult it is to satisfy a choir of singers; of how little use they are in general and how dangerous they are at all times to the peace of the Church of Christ! There was here a choir and there were some among them who understood music as well as most in the nation; and some, who taken individually, were both sensible and pious. These, in their collective capacity, wished to have a particular seat, with which the trustees could not conveniently accommodate them because of their engagements to other persons. When the singers found they could not have the places they wished, they came to a private resolution not to sing in the chapel. Of this resolution the preachers knew nothing. It was Mr. Clarke's turn to preach in the chapel at the Gun-Wharf the next Sabbath morning at seven; and there they intended to give the first exhibition of their dumb show. He gave out, as usual, the page and measure of the hymn. All was silent. He looked to see if the singers were in their places and behold, the choir was full, even unusually so. He thinking that they could not find the page or did not know the measure, gave out both again; and then looked them all full in the face, which they returned with great steadiness of countenance! He then raised the tune himself and the congregation continued the singing. Not knowing what the matter was, he gave out the next hymn as he had given out the former, again and again -- till they were silent. He then raised the tune and the congregation sang as fore. Afterwards he learned that as the trustees would not indulge them with the places they wished, they were determined to avenge their quarrel on Almighty God: for He should have no praise from them, since they could not have the seats they wished! The impiety of this conduct appeared to him in a most hideous point of view; for, if the singing be designed to set forth the praises of the Lord the refusing to do this because they could not have their own wills in sitting in a particular place, though they were offered, free of expense, one of the best situations in the chapel, was a broad insult on God Almighty. They continued this ungodly farce, hoping to reduce the trustees, preachers and society to the necessity of capitulating at discretion, but the besieged, by appointing a man to be always present to raise the tunes, cut off the whole choir at a stroke. From this time the liveliness and piety of the singing were considerably improved: for now the congregation instead of listening to the warbling of the choir, all joined in the singing, and God had hearty praise from every mouth. Mr. Clarke has often witnessed similar disaffection in other places by means of the singers and has frequently been heard to say: "Though I never had a personal quarrel with the singers in any place, yet I have never known any case where there was a choir of singers that they did not make disturbance in the societies. And it would be much better, in every case and in every respect to

employ a person to raise the tunes and then the congregation would learn to sing. The purpose of singing would be accomplished, -- every mouth would confess to God, and a horrible evil would be prevented, -- the bringing together into the house of God and making them the almost only instruments of celebrating His praises, such a company of gay, airy, giddy and ungodly men and women as are generally grouped in such choirs -- for voice and skill must be had, let decency of behavior and morality be where they will. Everything must be sacrificed to a good voice in order to make the choir complete and respectable. Many scandals have been brought into the Church of God by choirs and their accompaniments. Why do not the Methodist preachers lay this to heart?

"At the conduct of the singers in Plymouth Dock, Mr. Clarke was much grieved because there were among them men of sound sense, amiable manners and true piety: and so they continued in their individual capacity; but when once merged in the choir, they felt only for its honor and became like to other men! Disturbances of this kind which he has witnessed in all the large societies have led him often seriously to question whether choirs made any essential part in the worship of God! Most of those who are employed in them being the least spiritual part of the Church of Christ; generally proud, self-willed, obstinate and intractable: besides, they uniformly hinder congregational singing, the congregation leaving this work to them; and they desiring it so to be left."

Before closing this chapter let us hear a few words from John Wesley:

"When we came to Neath, I was a little surprised to hear I was to preach in the church; of which the church wardens had the disposal, the minister being just dead. I began reading prayers at six, but was greatly disgusted at the manner of singing. (1) Twelve or fourteen persons kept it to themselves, and quite shut out the congregation: (2) These repeated the same words, contrary to all sense and reason, six or eight or ten times over: (3) According to the shocking custom of modern music, different persons sang different words at one and the same moment; an intolerable insult on common sense, and utterly incompatible with any devotion. At five I had the pleasure of hearing the whole congregation at the room 'sing with the Spirit and the understanding also.' "

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

Chapter 18 **THE RIGHT KIND OF EVANGELISTS** **by Rev. H. C. Morrison**

Pastors frequently write us inquiring for safe evangelists to assist them in revival meetings. They usually specify something about the kind of man that will be suitable to their place. It is quite reasonable that a pastor who truly loves his flock should be deeply interested to secure for his assistance an evangelist of high order. They want men of good intelligence with a fair degree of education, and a genuine knowledge of the teachings of the Word of God. They want men who will make a respectable appearance in the pulpit -- not overdressed, not dudish, not slouchy. They want men perfectly discreet, who will be wise in all of their conduct toward the sisterhood, who know how to strike straight, strong, manly blows at sin -- masculine men who will draw and please men; courageous, but not outrageous; fearless, but not reckless; kind-hearted men, gentlemanly, affable, but not gushy and jolly; soldiers on duty, girded for battle. Serious, burdened men. Men of prayer, spiritually-minded, devout and true.

They want men who will bring things to pass. "They must not be monotonous; they must not preach too long, or too loud, or too low, or too fast, or too slow. Men who will not be a long time getting into the service, and who will not let the service drag -- who know how to close the service quickly and impressively. Who will send the people away with a good taste in their mouths. Men who are on to their jobs, who know how to present the truth of the Bible, who love lost souls and can pray for their fellow-beings. Men who can attract the people, teach the people, hold the people, awaken and lead the people to Jesus.

The demand for such men is remarkable. They are needed badly; they are called for from every quarter. There are thousands of souls waiting for such men to come and win them away from their sins. Such men are not so plentiful as you might think. The pastors want men who will keep in good humor, who won't get mad; who will bear and forbear and endure and come up shining and moving forward fearlessly, but with tender love. We should like to get in touch with about thirty thousand such men. The old world needs them, and will give them work day and night.

These men ought not to be so bound up with ecclesiastical harness that it will hinder a free circulation of the most fraternal Christian spirit and brotherly love toward all the household of faith. They ought not to so bind themselves with plans and promises made far ahead, that they cannot take advantage of doors providentially opened and get the great help that 'comes from the overlapping of the influence of a great revival held in one community upon a neighboring community. They should guard against spending too much time and money on long trips across the continent, but ought with thoughtful care to make their engagements so as to economize as much as possible both their time and their finances. They ought to be careful about leaving a meeting just as the people are becoming interested and conviction is falling upon the unsaved, but ought to be prepared to postpone the next

meeting and remain a few days longer in their field of labor and gather the bountiful and ripening harvest of souls made possible by the earnest labors they have put into the work.

It is certainly poor policy to preach ten days, two weeks, go even longer, and then leave a church just as the spirit of genuine revival is beginning to manifest itself. The evangelist ought to be wonderfully saved from the love of money. Of course, he has his family to support and his obligations to meet like other men, but he must be kept very free from any desire for riches, or to live in splendor or luxury. Fortunate the evangelist who is able to commit his financial matters to his God and press the battle without worry in his own mind or disgusting the people to whom he preaches on the subject of finance.

The evangelist will need to watch and pray against the spirit of mere professionalism, of working out certain plans that by and by will lose their spirit and power. He must keep his heart warm with holy devotion to his Master and earnest solicitude for the salvation of souls. If the evangelist is called of God into this special field of labor, divinely anointed for his task, and devotes himself unswervingly to the performance of it, he may be worn with arduous labor, he may shatter his nerves and shorten his days, but he will doubtless come home to his Master with a great armful of sheaves.

Constant evangelism will no doubt produce nervousness and nervousness makes excitement easy, and under strain and stress of preaching designed to draw the multitudes, arrest attention, awaken the conscience and compel men to action, the nervous evangelist under the excitement of heavy pressure and high tide, will need to guard himself with great care against unwise and severe speech, hurtful to himself, his brethren and the cause he loves.

Above all, our evangelists ought not to say unkind and bitter things about each other, in the pulpit, at the table, in the social circle, or elsewhere. No earnest evangelist can campaign the country, stir the people, condemn sin and win souls without drawing criticism and censure upon himself. These criticisms are likely to be poured into the ears of the brother evangelist who comes along next. It is easy for the brother evangelist to knit his eyebrows, widen his eyes with surprise and say, "Did he say that?" "Is it possible?" "Well, that was outrageous; I would not have thought it. No such man is fit for the pulpit." It is well to remain silent, dismiss the matter altogether or wait to render a decision until one hears the other side.

But enough; every reasonable person will understand that any evangelist who makes it the rule to publicly and constantly criticize and ridicule his brother evangelist, is destroying himself, and bringing upon himself the disapproval and censure of all thoughtful people who hear him.

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

Chapter 19 **A MINISTER DAMNED** **by E. E. Shelhamer and Others**

We are shocked, the cause of Christ disgraced and infidelity strengthened when a minister of the gospel falls into sin. Much more so if he be a holiness preacher. When we hear of it we are dumbfounded and cannot reconcile how it was possible for a man to disappoint us thus who had so recently preached with apparent unction and power.

But we must remember that he did not fall from a high state of grace suddenly. There were successive steps which led to his downfall. Long before it became known to the public, he had broken step with God; he had backslidden in heart and now his sad inward condition is made manifest. How did it begin? It began back there when he was at his height of glory and power; when he no longer felt the need of long seasons of wrestling in prayer in order to carry on a meeting; when he had rounded up a number of star sermons and could fall back upon any one of them without renewed study and dependence on God. All this may have been the case years before the collapse, but the devil could afford to wait, for he knew that the higher the preacher climbed, the more fearful would be the consequences when he fell. Oh, that it would have become manifest years ago, before he became so self-sufficient and capable of reasoning away the checks and reproofs of the Holy Spirit. There might have been some hope then of his humbling himself and confessing to the bottom, but now it is hard to die out to reputation and break away from subtle sins and strong delusions. God does not send these "strong delusions" that a minister might be "damned" until such a one has deliberately deceived and covered up things which ought to have been renounced and repented of long ago. How sad that there are such men still walking about with a bold front, who are as hopelessly damned as if they were now in hell. They are damned, not because God willed it, but because they will not repent. O brethren, let us be quick to humble ourselves and ever ready to acknowledge the least departure from the path of righteousness and holiness.

William Bramwell relates the following sad incident: "A gospel minister of evangelical principles, whose name, from the circumstances that occurred, it will be necessary to conceal, being much fatigued, at the conclusion of the afternoon service, retired to his apartment in order to take a little rest.

"He had not long reclined upon his couch, before he fell asleep and began to dream. He dreamed that on walking into his garden he entered a bower that had been erected in it, where he sat down to read and meditate. While thus employed, he thought he heard some person enter the garden, and immediately leaving his bower, he hastened toward the spot whence the sound seemed to come, in order to discover who it was that had entered. He had not proceeded far before he discovered a particular friend of his, a gospel minister of considerable talents, who had rendered himself very popular by his zealous and unwearied efforts in the cause of Christ. On approaching his friend he was surprised to find that his countenance was covered with a gloom, which it had not been

accustomed to wear, and that it strongly indicated a violent agitation of mind, apparently arising from conscious remorse.

"After the usual salutations had passed, his friend asked the relater the time of day, to which he replied, 'Twenty-five minutes after four.' On hearing this the stranger said, 'It is only one hour since I died, and now I am damned.' 'Damned! for what?' inquired the dreaming minister. 'It is not,' said he, 'because I have not preached the gospel, neither is it because I have not been rendered useful, for I have now many seals to my ministry, who can bear testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus, which they have received from my lips; but it is because I have been accumulating to myself the applause of men more than the honor which cometh from above: and verily I have my reward!' Having uttered these expressions he hastily disappeared and was seen no more.

"The minister awaking shortly afterward, with the contents of this dream deeply engraven on his memory, proceeded, overwhelmed with serious reflections, toward his chapel, in order to conduct the evening service. On his way thither he was accosted by a friend, who inquired whether he had heard of the severe loss the Church had sustained in the death of that able minister. He replied, 'No,' but being much affected at this singular intelligence, he inquired of him the day and the time of the day when his departure took place. To this his friend replied, 'This afternoon, at twenty-five minutes after three o'clock.' " -- *Memoirs of Bramwell.*

How true the statement of Richard Baxter when he says, "Preaching may well succeed to the salvation of others, without the holiness of your own hearts and lives: it is possible, at least, though not usual; but it is impossible it should serve to save yourselves. Many shall say at that day, 'Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name?' who shall be answered with, 'I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.' Oh, sirs, how many men have preached Christ, and perished for want of a saving interest in Him? How many that are now in hell have told their people of the torments of hell, and warned them to avoid it? How many have preached the wrath of God against sinners, that are now feeling it? Oh, what more melancholy case can there be than for a man that made it his trade and calling to proclaim salvation, and to help others to attain it, yet after all to be himself lost forever? Alas, for us, that we should have so many books in our libraries that tell us of the way to heaven; that we should spend so many years in reading those books, and studying the doctrine of eternal life; and, after all this, to miss it! That we should study and preach so many sermons upon salvation, and yet fall short of it; so many sermons on damnation, and yet fall into it! ... Believe it, sirs, God is no respecter of persons: He saveth men not for their coats or callings -- a holy calling will not save an unholy man."

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

Chapter 20 **THE EXEMPLARY MINISTER** **by E. E. Shelhamer and Others**

There are some things that are admitted by all to be wrong, then there are other things upon which there is a difference of opinion; yet to do the same would not be exemplary to say the least, but rather the appearance of evil and a step in the wrong direction. The not refraining from doubtful things encourages others to go still farther and thus grieve the Spirit and some of the people of God. Take, for instance, the using of tobacco, "the wearing of gold," viewing a race, or baseball, Sunday travel, or the doing of other things which are matters of conscience with many good people.

An old railroad conductor was asked what was the most important rule in their "Book of Rules." His quick and positive answer was, "When in doubt always take the safe side."

If this is such an important rule for those engaged in earthly transportation, how much more careful ought those to be who have anything to do with Celestial railroading. In making the run for Glory we cannot afford to run any risk, since we are going this way but once. It would seem that those who travel and especially those (preachers) who are in charge of a party, would take the utmost precaution to be on the safe side of every question.

It is unfortunate that there are lopsided souls who are very loud on some issues and very loose on others. Some of these dear Ones are ever ready to discount and depreciate every one who does not measure up to their light or way of thinking. Now, this is wrong. If the Holy Unction is upon a man and he manifests true humility, his message ought not to be discounted even though he does not do things to suit my personal convictions. And to this I hear a thousand "amens."

But it is a poor rule that will not work both ways. If it is wrong, and a sign of "weakness" to stumble over another because of what he does, is it not equally wrong to set or follow a precedent that is known to be a source of grievance to many conscientious souls? Why not be on the safe side and take such a position as will enable one to be as helpful to every soul as possible? In so doing nothing is lost but possibly much gained. Someone might stumble over me if he saw me do some questionable thing, but he cannot stumble over me if I am clear in these and all other matters.

The same principle will hold, relative to the wife and children of a minister. In too many cases his lips are closed, or if he does speak out against worldliness, extravagance, and Sabbath irreverence, his words fly back into his face or are taken as a pulpit-joke, because of the poor example set by his family. This is very unfortunate and reflects upon him in one or all of three respects -- his sincerity, home piety, or lack of family government, either of which is a calamity.

Is it not a notable fact that compromisers never quote a ruffian, but rather the best man they can find, to uphold and defend their position in the wrong direction? And who wants the unenviable record of being such a champion?

But it has come to pass that he who dares to preach and follow his convictions in every respect is looked upon by many of his brethren as being "narrow". Nevertheless, such men are often entrusted with grave and responsible positions, which proves that if they are capable of filling these, they ought to be able to judge in smaller things.

Was it a sign of weakness or greatness in Paul that caused him to say, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth lest I make my brother to offend"?

Again he said, "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."

How unlike some of our modern "representative men," who would more than likely say, "Well, if you want to stumble over such little things, you will just have to stumble." Oh, my brethren, why not be exemplary on every line, especially on those lines which are agitated during the particular age in which we live? What if some do brand you as being sticklers for minor or decaying issues? The great need of the day is for men who have the courage not simply to rally around popular issues, but who can keep tender, yet as unmovable as Gibraltar when it comes to obeying God and conscience in minor things which, nevertheless, have a vital underlying principle. To do so requires more manliness and strength of character than to face pestilence, cannon balls or death itself. Reader, will you be one?

In reference to some of these things Bishop Simpson, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, says, "Avoid all stimulants of every character which may be recommended to strengthen your voice or to assist you in pulpit duties. I can scarcely suppose that anyone who believes himself called to the ministry will countenance their use. Yet kind friends will sometimes suggest that you are weak, your nerves are tremulous, you have been out in the cold, you need a stimulant; and they will urge the taking of a little wine or brandy before preaching. These friends, if from England or Ireland, will tell you that the most distinguished ministers are in the habit of using them; and I regret to say that in many churches there both wine and brandy are kept in the vestry for the use of the minister both before and after preaching. On my first visit to the old countries the kind sextons seemed to be as much astonished that I would not accept them as I was amazed at their being offered. I have known some young ministers who used a few drops of paregoric or a small quantity of opium to give them temporary strength in the pulpit. I am glad to say that I have known but few such cases, but I must add that these were led in the end to either physical or moral ruin.

"Others limit themselves to two or three cups of strong coffee or tea. The effect of these stimulants is unquestionably to give greater strength to the system for the time; but all such artificial strength is a draft which must be repaid with interest. The unnatural excitement will be followed by subsequent depression. God does not require us to use artificial strength in the pulpit. We must give ourselves in our best vigor and culture to His service, but we should so give ourselves that the service of one hour shall not destroy our power for subsequent usefulness. I believe one reason why

so many ministers complain of 'blue Monday' is that they have keyed up their systems by extra efforts beyond their natural tension and the excitement, passing away, leaves them depressed.

"So with tobacco. In some places congregations are unwilling to receive ministers who indulge in its use. Many families almost dread the visits of such ministers, lest their growing sons will be led to adopt a practice which they so earnestly discountenance and oppose. The least that can be said is, it is a costly mode of needless self-indulgence, and as such, it stands in the way of a minister's usefulness. He pleads the missionary cause and urges his congregation to economize; but his words fall powerless when they see that he does not love the cause of missions so much as to restrain his own indulgence. To many, the odor of the cigar or of tobacco is unpleasant, and especially in the sick room. But for persons of nervous organization, as ministers usually are, it is an unmixed evil. It gives temporary tension to produce ultimate relaxation. Not a few cases have I known of most promising and talented young men who have been by it hastened to an untimely grave. I suppose there is sometimes a relish and enjoyment connected with it, for I have seen men sit for an hour, smoking, with their feet upon a table and professing to be studying. I have no doubt they had visions of greatness and glory; but a somewhat extensive and prolonged observation shows that their lives usually end with their cigars -- in SMOKE."

Rev. A. Sims says: "Who is to blame for the shallow experience of many professing Christians? We reply, the men under whom they are professedly saved. If deluded souls were taught the whole counsel of God by ministers and editors, they would see their unsaved condition, and spurious religion would not spread so rapidly. As it is, a vast multitude are made to believe a lie under the teachings of these men. Milk-and-water papers publish their testimonies. Many of the holiness journals are laden with just such shuffling testimonies. We have read them until we are perfectly disgusted with such sham holiness. We ask, can one wonder at such hollow testimonies, when so many holiness (?) teachers are doing shoddy work? Like begets like. These men say they let the Holy Ghost show the people in regard to dress, Masonry and tobacco, etc. Now, if it is right to leave to the Holy Ghost the work of showing the people these sins, it is equally right to let the Holy Ghost preach pardon and holiness. Paul says, 'I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God.' Both he and Peter did show the people in regard to pride in dress, and many other popular sins. So will every true ambassador of the Cross."

Says Wesley: "But how terrible is this! when the ambassadors of God turn agents for the devil -- when they who are commissioned to teach men the way to heaven do in fact teach the way to hell. If ever asked, 'Why, who does this?' I answer, ten thousand wise and honorable men; even all of those, of whatever denomination, who encourage the proud, the trifler, the passionate, the lover of the world, the man of pleasure, the unjust or unkind, the easy, careless, harmless, useless creatures, the man who suffers no persecution for righteousness' sake, to imagine he is in the way to heaven. These are false prophets, in the highest sense of the word. These are traitors both to God and man. These are no other than the firstborn of Satan; the eldest son of Apollyon, the destroyer. These are far above the rank of ordinary cutthroats; for they murder the souls of men. They are continually peopling the realms of night; and whenever they follow the poor souls they have destroyed, 'hell shall be moved from beneath to meet them at their coming.' "

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

Chapter 21 **A WISE MINISTER WILL BE SUCCESSFUL** **by Charles G. Finney**

"He that winneth souls is wise." (Prov. 11:30.)

The great end for which the Christian ministry was appointed is to glorify God in the salvation of souls. In speaking on this subject I propose to show:

1. That a right discharge of the duties of a minister requires great wisdom. In order to be successful a minister needs great wisdom to know how to keep the church to the work. To know how to break them down again when their heart gets lifted up because they have had such a great revival; to wake them up afresh when their zeal begins to flag; to keep their hearts full of zeal for the work; these are some of the most difficult things in the world. Yet if a minister would be successful in winning souls, he must know when they first begin grow proud, or to lose the spirit of prayer and when to prove them and how to search them over again, how to keep the church in the field, gathering the harvest of the Lord.

A minister needs great wisdom to get sinners away from their present refuges of lies without forming new hiding places for them. I once sat under the ministry of a man who had contracted a great alarm about heresies and was constantly employed in confuting them. And he used to bring up many such heresies as his people never heard of. He got his ideas chiefly from books and mingled very little among the people to know what they thought. And the result of his labors often was that the people would be taken with the heresy more than with the argument against it. The novelty of the error attracted their attention so much that they forgot the answer. And in that way he gave many of his people new objections against religion, such as they never thought of before.

Not a little wisdom is sometimes needed by a minister to know when to put a stop to new measures. When a measure has novelty enough to secure attention to the truth, ordinarily no other new measure should be introduced. You have secured the great object of novelty. Anything more will be in danger of diverting the public mind away from the great object and fixing it on the measures themselves. And then, if you introduce novelties when they are not called for, you will go over so large a field that by and by, when you really want some thing new, you will have nothing else to introduce with out doing something that will give too great a shock to the public mind.

The amount of a minister's success in winning souls (other things being equal) invariably decides the amount of wisdom he has exercised in the discharge of his office. This is plainly asserted in the text, "He that winneth souls is wise." That is, if a man wins souls, he does skillfully adapt means to the end, which is, to exercise wisdom. He is the more wise by how much the greater is the number of sinners that he saves. A blockhead may indeed now and then stumble on such truth, or such a manner of exhibiting it, as to save a soul. It would be a wonder indeed if any minister did not

sometimes have something in his sermons that would meet the case -of some individual. But the amount of wisdom is to be decided, "other things being equal," by the number of cases in which he is successful in converting sinners. Take the case of a physician. The greatest quack in New York may now and then stumble upon a remarkable cure and so get his name up with the ignorant. But sober and judicious people judge the skill of a physician by the uniformity of his success in overcoming disease, the variety of diseases he can manage, and the number of cases in which he is successful in saving his patients. The most skillful saves the most. This is common sense. It is truth, and it is just as true in regard to success in saving souls, and true in just the same sense.

An unsuccessful minister may be pious as well as learned, and yet not wise. It is unfair to infer because a minister is unsuccessful, that therefore he is a hypocrite. There may be something defective in his education, or in his mode of viewing a subject, or in exhibiting it, or such as want of common sense as will defeat his labors and prevent his success in winning souls, while he himself may be saved -- "yet so as by fire."

Want of success in a minister (other things being equal) proves, (1) either that he was never called to preach, and has taken it up out of his own head; or (2) that he was badly educated and was never taught the very things he wants most to know; or (3) if he was called to preach, and knows how to do his duty, he is too indolent and too wicked to do it.

Those are the best educated ministers who win the most souls. Ministers are sometimes looked down upon and called very ignorant, because they do not know the sciences and languages; although they are very far from being ignorant of the great thing for which the ministry is appointed. This is wrong. Learning is important and always useful. But, after all, a minister may know how to win souls to Christ without great learning, and he has the best education for a minister, who can win the most souls to Christ. There is evidently a great defect in the present mode of educating ministers.

Let education be of the right kind, teaching a young man the things he wants to know and not the very things he does not want to know. Let them be educated for the work. Do not let education be such, that when young men come out, after spending six, eight, or ten years in study, they are not worth half as much as they were before they went. I have known young men come out after what they call "a thorough course," who were not fit to take charge of a prayer meeting. and who could not manage a prayer meeting so as to make it profitable or interesting. And here I would say, that to my own mind, it appears evident, that unless our theological professors preach a good deal, mingle much with the church, and sympathize with her in all her movements, it is morally, if not naturally impossible, that they should succeed in training young men to the spirit of the age. It is a shame and a sin, that theological professors, who preach but seldom, who are withdrawn from the active duties of the ministry, should sit in their studies and write their letters, advisory, or dictatorial, to ministers and churches who are in the field, and who are in circumstances to judge what needs to be done.

Finally, I wish to ask you, before I sit down, who among you can lay any claim to the possession of this divine wisdom? Who among you, laymen? Who among you, ministers? Can any of you? Can I? Are we at work, wisely, to win souls? Or are we trying to make ourselves believe that success is no criterion of wisdom? It is a criterion. It is a safe criterion for every minister to try himself by. The amount of his success, other things being equal, measures the amount of wisdom he has exercised

in the discharge of his office. How few of you have ever had wisdom enough to convert so much as a single sinner!

Don't say now, "I cannot convert sinners; how can I convert sinners? God alone can convert sinners." Look at the text, 'He that winneth souls is wise,' and do not think you can escape the sentence. It is true that God converts sinners. But there is a sense, too, in which ministers convert them. And you have something to do; something that requires wisdom; something which, if you do it wisely, will insure the conversion of sinners in proportion to the wisdom employed. If you never have done this, it is high time to think about yourselves and see whether you have wisdom enough to save even your own souls.

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

Chapter 22 **HOW TO PREACH THE GOSPEL** **by Charles G. Finney**

"He that winneth souls is wise" (Prov. 11:30).

All preaching should be practical.

The proper end of all doctrine is practice. Any thing brought forward as doctrine, which cannot be made use of as practical, is not preaching the gospel. There is none of that sort of preaching in the Bible. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." A vast deal of preaching in the present day, as well as in past ages, is called doctrinal, as opposed to practical preaching. The very idea of making this distinction is a device of the devil. And a more abominable device Satan himself never devised. You sometimes hear certain men tell a wonderful deal about the necessity of "indoctrinating the people," by which they mean something different from practical preaching; teaching them certain doctrines, as abstract truths, without any particular reference to practice. And I have known a minister in the midst of a revival while surrounded with anxious sinners leave off laboring to convert souls for the purpose of "indoctrinating" the young converts, for fear somebody else should indoctrinate them before him. And there the revival stops. Either his doctrine was not true, or it was not preached in the right way. To preach doctrines in an abstract way, and not in reference to practice, is absurd. God always brings in doctrine to regulate practice. To bring forward doctrinal views for any other object is not only nonsense, but it is wicked.

Some people are opposed to doctrinal preaching. If they have been used to hear doctrines preached in a cold, abstract way, no wonder they are opposed to it. They ought to be opposed to such preaching. But what can a man preach who preaches no doctrine? If he preaches no doctrine, he preaches no gospel. And if he does not preach it in a practical way, he does not preach the gospel. All preaching should be doctrinal, and all preaching should be practical. The very design of doctrine is to regulate practice. Any preaching that has not this tendency is not the gospel. A loose, exhortatory style of preaching may affect the passions, and may produce excitement, but will never sufficiently instruct the people to secure sound conversions. On the other hand, preaching doctrine in an abstract manner may fill the head with notions, but will never sanctify the heart or life.

A minister ought to know the religious opinions of every sinner in his congregation. Indeed a minister in the country is inexcusable if he does not. He has no excuse for not knowing the religious views of all his congregation, and of all that may come under his influence. How otherwise can he preach to them? How can he know how to bring forth things new and old, and adapt truth to their case? How can he hunt them out unless he knows where they hide themselves? He may ring changes on a few fundamental doctrines, Repentance and Faith, and Faith and Repentance, till the day of

judgment, and never make any impression on many minds. Every sinner has some hiding place, some entrenchment where he lingers. He is in possession of some darling LIE, with which he is quieting himself. Let the minister find it out and get it away, either in the pulpit or in private, or the man will go to hell in his sins, and his blood will be found on the minister's skirts.

Sometimes he may find a people who have been led to place great reliance on their own resolutions. They think they can consult their own convenience, and bye and bye they will repent, when they get ready, without any concern about the Spirit of God. Let him take up these notions, and show that they are entirely contrary to the Scriptures. Let him show that if the Spirit of God is grieved away, however able he may be, it is certain he never will repent, and that bye and bye, when it shall be convenient for him to do it, he will have no inclination. The minister who finds these errors prevailing should expose them. He should hunt them out, and understand just how they are held, and then preach the class of truths which will show the danger of these notions.

So on the other hand he may find a people who have got such views of Election and Sovereignty, as to think they have nothing to do but to wait for the moving of the waters. Let him go right over against them, and crowd upon their ability to obey God, and show their obligation and duty, and press them with that until he brings them to submit and be saved. They have got behind a perverted view of these doctrines, and there is no way to drive them out of the hiding place, but to set them right on these points. Wherever a sinner is entrenched, unless you pour light upon him there, you will never move him. It is of no use to press him with those truths which he admits, however plainly they may in fact contradict his wrong notions. He supposes them to be perfectly consistent, and does not see the inconsistency, and therefore it will not move him, or bring him to repentance.

Another very important thing to be regarded in preaching is that the minister should hunt after sinners and Christians wherever they may have entrenched themselves in inaction. It is not the design of preaching to make men easy and quiet but to make them ACT. It is not the design of calling in a physician to have him give opiates and so cover up the disease and let it run on till it works death; but to search out the disease wherever it may be hidden and to remove it. So if a professor of religion has backslidden and is full of doubts and fears, it is not the minister's duty to quiet him in his sins and comfort him, but to hunt him out of his errors and backslidings and show him just where he stands and what it is that makes him full of doubts and fears.

I have been in many places in times of revival and I have never been able to employ precisely the same course of preaching in one as in another. Some are entrenched behind one refuge and some behind another. In one place the church will need to be instructed; in another, sinners. In one place, one set of truths; in another, another set. A minister must find out where they are and preach accordingly.

If a minister means to promote a revival, he should be very careful not to introduce controversy. He will grieve away the Spirit of God. In this way probably more revivals are put down than in any other. Look back upon the history of the church from the beginning and you will see that ministers are generally responsible for grieving away the Spirit and causing declensions, by controversy. It is the ministers who bring forward controversial subjects for discussion.

When Christians are revived they are not inclined to meddle with controversy, either to read or hear it. But they may be told of such and such "damnable heresies" that are afloat till they get their feelings enlisted in controversy, and then farewell to the revival. If a minister, in preaching, finds it necessary to discuss particular points about which Christians differ in opinion, let him BY ALL MEANS avoid a controversial spirit and manner of doing it.

The gospel should be preached in those proportions that the whole gospel may be brought before the minds of the people and produce its proper influence. If too much stress is laid on one class of truths, the Christian character will not have its due proportions. Its symmetry will not be perfect- If that class of truths be almost exclusively dwelt upon that requires great exertion of intellect without being brought home to the heart and conscience, it will be found that the Church will be indoctrinated in these views) will have their heads filled with notions, but will not be awake and active and efficient in the promotion of religion. If, on the other hand, the preaching be loose, indefinite, exhortatory and highly impassioned, the Church will be like a ship with too much sail for her ballast. It will be in danger of being swept away by a tempest of feeling where there is not sufficient knowledge to prevent their being carried away with every wind of doctrine.

It is of great importance that the sinner should be made to feel his guilt and not left to the impression that he is unfortunate. I think this is a very prevailing fault particularly with printed books on the subject- They are calculated to make the sinner think more of his sorrows than of his sins and feel that his state is rather unfortunate than criminal.

A prime object with the preacher must be to make present obligation felt. I have talked, I suppose with many thousands of anxious sinners, and I have found that they had never before felt the pressure of present obligation. The impression is not commonly made by ministers in their preaching that sinners are expected to repent NOW. And if ministers suppose they make this impression, they deceive themselves. Most commonly any other impression is made upon the minds of sinners than that they are expected now to submit.

Sinners should be made to feel that if they now grieve away the Spirit of God, it is very probable that they will be lost forever. There is infinite danger of this. They should be made to understand why they are dependent on the Spirit, and that is not because they cannot do what God commands, but because they are unwilling; but that they are so unwilling that it is just as certain they will not repent without the Holy Ghost, as if they were now in hell, or as if they were actually unable. They are so opposed and so unwilling that they never will repent unless God sends His Holy Spirit upon them.

Use words that can be perfectly understood. Do not, for fear of appearing unlearned, use language half Latin and half Greek, which the people do not understand. The apostle says the man is a barbarian who uses language that the people do not understand. And if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle?" In the apostle's days there were some preachers who were marvelously proud of displaying their command of language, and showing off the variety of tongues they could speak, which the common people could not understand. The apostle rebukes this spirit sharply, and says, "I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue."

The illustrations should be drawn from common life, and the common business of society. I once heard a minister illustrate his ideas by the manner in which merchants transact business in their stores. Another minister who was present made some remarks to him afterward. He objected to this illustration particularly, because, he said, it was too familiar, and was letting down the dignity of the pulpit- He said all illustrations in preaching should be drawn from ancient history, or some elevated source, that would keep up the dignity of the pulpit. Dignity indeed! Just the language of the devil. He rejoices in it. Why, the object of an illustration is to make people see the truth, not to bolster up pulpit dignity. A minister whose heart is in the work does not use an illustration to make people stare, but to make them see the truth.

The Savior always illustrated His instructions by things that were taking place among the people to whom He preached, and with which their minds were familiar. He descended often very far below what is now supposed to be essential to support the dignity of the pulpit. He talked about the hens and chickens, and children in market places, and sheep and lambs, shepherds and farmers, and husbandmen and merchants. And when He talked about kings, as in the marriage of the king's son, and the nobleman that went into a far country to receive a kingdom, He had reference to historical facts, that were well known among the people at the time. The illustrations should always be drawn from things so common that the illustration itself will not attract attention away from the subject, but that people may see through it the truth illustrated.

I once heard a remark made, respecting a young minister's preaching, which was instructive. He was uneducated, in the common sense of the term, but well educated to win souls. It was said of him, "The manner in which he comes in, and sits in the pulpit, and rises to speak, is a sermon of itself. It shows that he has something to say that is important and solemn. That man's manner of saying some things I have known to move a whole congregation, when the same things said in a prosy way would have produced no effect at all."

A minister must anticipate the objections of sinners, and answer them. What does the lawyer do when pleading before a jury? Oh, how differently is the cause of Jesus Christ pleaded from human causes! It was remarked by a lawyer, that the cause of Jesus Christ had the fewest able advocates of any cause in the world. And I partly believe it. Does a lawyer go along in his argument in a regular train, and not explain anything obscure, or anticipate the arguments of his antagonist? If he did so, he would lose his case, to a certainty. But no. The lawyer, who is pleading for money, anticipates every objection which may be made by his antagonist, and carefully removes or explains them, so as to leave the ground all clear as he goes along, that the jury may be settled on every point- But ministers often leave one difficulty and another, untouched. Sinners who hear them feel the difficulty, and it is never gotten over in their minds, and they never know how to remove it, and perhaps the minister never takes the trouble to know why such difficulties exist, and yet he wonders why his congregation is not converted, and why there is no revival. How can he wonder at it, when he has never hunted up the difficulties and objections that sinners feel, and removed them.

A minister should address the feelings enough to secure attention, and then deal with conscience, and probe to the quick. Appeals to the feelings alone will never convert sinners. If the preacher deals too much in these, he may get up an excitement and have wave after wave of feeling flow over the congregation, and people may be carried away in the flood, with false hopes. The only way to secure

sound conversions is to deal faithfully with the conscience. If attention flags at any time, appeal to the feelings again, and rouse it up; but do your work with conscience.

Before the gospel can take general effect, we must have a class of extempore preachers, for the following reasons:

(1) No set of men can stand the labor of writing sermons and doing all the preaching which will be requisite.

(2) Written preaching is not calculated to produce the requisite effect. Such preaching does not present truth in the right shape.

(3) It is impossible for a man who writes his sermons to arrange his matter, and turn and choose his thoughts, so as to produce the same effect as when he addresses the people directly, and makes them feel that he means them.

We shall never have a set of men in our halls of legislation, in our courts of justice, and in our pulpits, that are powerful and overwhelming speakers, and can carry the world before them, till our system of education teaches them to think, closely, rapidly, consecutively, and till all their habits of speaking in the schools are extemporaneous. The very style of communicating thought, in what is commonly called a good style of writing, is not calculated to leave a deep impression on the mind, or to communicate thought in a clear and impressive manner. It is not laconic, direct, pertinent. It is not the language of nature. It is impossible that gestures should be suited to the common style of writing. And consequently, when they attempt to gesture in reading an essay, or delivering a written sermon, their gestures are a burlesque upon all public speaking.

We can never have the full meaning of the gospel, till we throw away our notes.

A minister's course of study and training for his work should be exclusively theological.

I mean just as I say. I am not now going to discuss the question whether all education ought not to be theological. But I say education for the ministry should be exclusively so. But you will ask, Should not a minister understand science? I would answer, Yes, the more the better. I would that ministers might understand all science. But it should all be in connection with theology. Studying science is studying the works of God. And studying theology is studying God.

We learn what is revival preaching. All ministers should be revival ministers, and all preaching should be revival preaching; that is, it should be calculated to promote holiness. People say, "It is very well to have some men in the church who are revival preachers and who can go about and promote revivals, but then you must have others to indoctrinate the church." Strange! Do they not know that a revival indoctrinates the church faster than anything else? A minister will never produce a revival, if he does not indoctrinate his hearers. The preaching I have described is full of doctrine, but it is doctrine to be practiced. And that is revival preaching.

The bishop of London once asked Garrick, the celebrated play-actor, why it was that actors, in representing a mere fiction, should move an assembly, even to tears, while ministers, in representing the most solemn realities, could scarcely obtain a hearing. The philosophical Garrick well replied, "It is because we represent fiction as a reality and you represent reality as a fiction." This is telling the whole story. Now what is the design of the actor in a theatrical representation? It is so to throw himself into the spirit and meaning of the writer, as to adopt his sentiments, make them his own, feel them, embody them, throw them out upon the audience as living reality. And now, what is the objection to all this in preaching?

When a vacant church is looking out for a minister, there are two leading points on which they commonly fix their attention: (1) That he should be popular, (2) That he should be learned. That is very well. But this point should be first in their inquiries, "Is he wise to win souls?" No matter how eloquent a minister is, no matter how pleasing and popular are his manners, if it is a matter of fact that sinners are not converted under his preaching, it shows that he has not this wisdom, and your children and neighbors will go down to hell under his preaching.

But if there be ministers who are doing no good, who are feeding themselves and not the flock, such ministers deserve no influence. If they are doing no good, it is time for them to betake themselves to some other profession. They are but leeches on the very vitals of the Church, sucking out its heart's blood. They are useless, and worse than useless, and the sooner they are laid aside, and their places filled with those who will exert themselves for Christ, the better.

Finally: It is the duty of the Church to pray for us ministers. Not one of us is such as he ought to be. Not one of us is such as we ought to be. Like Paul, we can say, "Who is sufficient for these things?" But who of us is like Paul? Where will you find such a minister as Paul? They are not here. We have been educated, all of us. Pray for the schools and colleges and seminaries; and pray for the young men who are preparing for the ministry. Pray for ministers that God would give them this wisdom to win souls.

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

Chapter 23 AN OPEN LETTER TO A MINISTER by John Wesley

December, 1876

"Dear: -- You know I love you. Ever since I knew you, I have neglected no way of showing it, that was in my power. And you know I esteem you for your zeal and activity, for your love of discipline and for your gifts which God has given you, particularly quickness of apprehension and readiness of utterance; especially in prayer.

"Therefore I am jealous over you lest you should lose any of the things you have gained and not receive the full reward: and the more so, because I fear you are wanting in other respects. And who will venture to tell you so? You will scarce know how to bear it from me unless you lift up your heart to God. If you do this I may venture to tell you what I fear without any further preface. I fear you think of yourself more highly than you ought to think. Do you not think too highly of your own understanding? Of your gifts? Particularly in preaching? As if you were the very best preacher in the connection? Of your own importance? As if the work of God here or there depended wholly or mainly on you? And of your popularity which I have found to my surprise far less, even in L____, than I expected?

"May this not be much owing to the want of brotherly love? With what measure you mete, men will measure to you again. I fear there is something unloving in your spirit; something not only of roughness but of harshness, yea, of sourness! Are you not also extremely open to prejudice, and not easy to be cured of it? So that whenever you are prejudiced you become bitter, implacable, unmerciful? If so, that people are prejudiced against you it is both the natural and the judicial consequence.

"I am afraid lest your want of love to your neighbors should spring from want of love to God; from want of thankfulness. I have sometimes heard you speak in a manner that made me tremble; indeed, in terms that not only a weak Christian, but even a serious Deist, would scruple to use.

"I fear you greatly want evenness of temper. Are you not generally too high or too low? Are not all your passions too lively? Your anger in particular? Is it not too soon raised? And is it not too impetuous? Causing you to be violent, boisterous, bearing down all before you?

"Now, lift up your heart to God, or you will be angry at me. But I must go a little farther. I fear you are greatly wanting in government of your tongue. You are not exact in relating facts. I have observed it myself. You are too apt to amplify; to enlarge a little beyond the truth. You cannot imagine, if others observe this, how it will affect your reputation.

"But I fear you are more wanting in another respect: that you give a loose rein to your tongue when you are angry, that your language then is not only sharp, but coarse and ill-bred. If this be so, the people will not bear it-They will not take it either from you or me.

"I am your affectionate brother, John Wesley."

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

Chapter 24 **DIRECTIONS CONCERNING PRONUNCIATION AND GESTURE** **by John Wesley**

How We May Speak So As To Be Heard
Without Difficulty, and With Pleasure

Before we enter upon particular rules, I would advise all who can, (1) To study the art of speaking betimes, and to practice it as often as possible, before they have contracted any of the common imperfections or vices of speaking; for these may easily be avoided at first, but when they are once learned, it is extremely difficult to unlearn them. I advise all young persons, (2) To be governed in speaking, as in all other things, by reason rather than example, and therefore, to have an especial care whom they imitate therein; and to imitate only what is right in their manner of speaking, not their blemishes and imperfections.

The first business of a speaker is, so to speak, that he may be heard and understood with ease.

The chief faults of speaking are:

(1) The speaking too loud. This is disagreeable to the hearers, as well as inconvenient for the speaker. For they must impute it either to ignorance or affectation, which is never so inexcusable as in preaching.

Every man's voice should indeed fill the place where he speaks; but if it exceeds its natural key, it will be neither sweet, nor soft, nor agreeable, were it only on this account, that he cannot then give every word its proper and distinguishing sound.

(2) The speaking too low. This is, of the two, more disagreeable than the former. Take care, therefore, to keep between the extremes; to preserve the key, the command of your voice; and to adopt the loudness of it to the place where you are, or the number of persons to whom you speak.

In order to this, consider whether your voice be naturally loud or low; and if it incline to either extreme, correct this first in your ordinary conversation. If it be too low, converse with those that are deaf; if too loud, with those who speak softly.

(3) The speaking in a thick, clustering manner. Some persons mumble, or swallow some words or syllables, and do not utter the rest articulately or distinctly. This is sometimes owing to a natural defect; sometimes to a sudden flutter of spirits; but oftener to a bad habit. To cure this, accustom yourself, both in conversation and reading, to pronounce every word distinctly. Observe how full a sound some give to every word, and labor to imitate them. If no other way avail, do as Demosthenes

did, who cured himself of this natural defect, by repeating orations every day with pebbles in his mouth.

(4) The speaking too fast. This is a common fault; but not a little one; particularly when we speak of things of God. It may be cured by habituating yourself to attend to the weight, sense and propriety of every word you speak.

(5) The speaking too slow is not a common fault; and when we are once warned of it, it may be easily avoided.

(6) The speaking with an irregular, desultory, and uneven voice, raised or depressed unnaturally or unseasonably. To cure this, you should take care not to begin your periods either too high or too low; for that would necessarily lead you to an unnatural and improper variation of the voice. And remember, never either to raise or sink your voice, without a particular reason, arising either from the length of the period, or the sense or spirit of what you speak.

(7) But the greatest and most common fault of all, is the speaking with a tone: some have a womanish, squeaking tone; some a singing or canting one; some a high, swelling, theatrical tone, laying too much emphasis on every sentence; some have an awful, solemn tone; others an odd, whimsical, whining one, not to be expressed in words.

To avoid all kinds of unnatural tones, the only rule is this: Endeavor to speak in public just as you do in common conversation. Attend to your subject, and deliver it in the same manner as if you were talking of it to a friend. This, if carefully observed, will correct both this and almost all the other faults of a bad pronunciation.

For a good pronunciation is nothing but a natural, easy and graceful variation of the voice, suitable to the nature and importance of the sentiments we deliver.

If you would be heard with pleasure, in order to make the deeper impression on your hearers, First, study to render your voice as soft and sweet as possible; and the more, if it be naturally harsh, hoarse or obstreperous; which may be cured by constant exercise. By carefully using this every morning, you may in a short time wear off these defects, and contract such a smooth and tuneful delivery as will recommend whatever you speak.

Secondly, Labor to avoid the odious custom of coughing and spitting while you are speaking. And if at sometimes you cannot wholly avoid it, yet take care you do not stop in the middle of a sentence, but only at such times as will least interrupt the sense of what you are delivering. Above all take care, Thirdly, To vary your voice, according to the matter on which you speak. Nothing more grates the ear, than a voice still in the same key. And yet nothing is more common; although this monotony is not only unpleasant to the ear, but destroys the effect of what is spoken.

The best way to learn how to vary the voice is to observe common discourse. Take notice how you speak yourself in ordinary conversation, and how others speak on various occasions. After the

very same manner you are to vary your voice in public, allowing for the largeness of the place, and the distance of the hearers.

RULES FOR VARIATION OF THE VOICE

The voice may be varied three ways: First, as to height or lowness; Secondly, as to vehemence or softness; Thirdly, as to swiftness or slowness.

And, (1) As to height, a medium between the extremes is carefully to be observed. You must neither strain your voice, by raising it always to the highest note it can reach; nor sink it always to the lowest note, which would be to murmur rather than to speak.

(2) As to vehemence, have a care how you force your voice to the last extremity. You cannot hold this long without danger of its cracking and failing you on a sudden. Nor yet ought you to speak in too faint and remiss a manner, which destroys all the force and energy of what is spoken.

(3) As to swiftness, you ought to moderate the voice so as to avoid all precipitation; otherwise you give the hearers no time to think, and so are not likely either to convince or persuade them. Yet neither should you speak slower than men generally do in common conversation. It is a fault to draw out your words too slow, or to make needless breaks or pauses. Nay, to drawl is (of the two) worse than to hurry. The speech ought not to drop, but to flow along. But then it ought to flow like a gliding stream, not as a rapid torrent.

On all occasions let the thing you are to speak be deeply imprinted on your own heart; and when you are sensibly touched yourself you will easily touch others, by adjusting your voice to every passion which you feel.

You should begin a discourse low, both as it expresses modesty and as it is best for your voice and strength; and yet so as to be heard by all that are present. You may afterward rise as the matter shall require. The audience likewise, being calm and unmoved at first, are best suited by a cool and dispassionate address.

Yet this rule admits of some exceptions; for on some extraordinary occasions you may begin a discourse abruptly and passionately, and consequently with a warm and passionate accent.

ON GESTURE

(1) That this silent language of your face and hands may move the affections of those that see and hear you, it must be well adjusted to the subject, as well as to the passion which you desire either to express or excite. It must likewise be free from all affectation, and such as appears to be the mere, natural result, both of the things you speak, and of the affection that moves you to speak them. And the whole is so to be managed that there may be nothing in all the dispositions and motions of your body to offend the eyes of the spectators.

(2) But it is more difficult to find out the faults of your own gesture, than those of your pronunciation; for a man may hear his own voice but he cannot see his own face; neither can he observe the several motions of his own body; at least but imperfectly. To remedy this you may use a large looking glass, as Demosthenes did, and thereby observe and learn to avoid every disagreeable or unhandsome gesture.

(3) There is but one way better than this; which is to have some excellent pattern as often as may be before your eyes, and to desire some skillful and faithful friend to observe all your motions and inform you which are proper and which are not.

(4) As to the motion of the body, it ought not to change its place or posture every moment; neither on the other hand, to stand like a stock, in one fixed and immovable posture; but to move in a natural and graceful manner, as various circumstances may require.

(5) You should always be casting your eyes upon some or other of your auditors, and looking from one side to the other, with an air of affection and regard; looking them decently in the face, one after another, as we do in familiar conversation. Your aspect should always be pleasant and your looks direct, neither severe nor askew; unless you design to express contempt or scorn, which may require that particular aspect.

(6) If you speak of heaven or things above, lift up your eyes; if of things beneath, cast them down; and so if you speak things of disgrace; but raise them in calling God to witness, or speaking of things wherein you glory.

(7) The mouth must never be turned awry; neither must you bite or lick your lips, or shrug up your shoulders, or lean upon your elbow; all which give just offense to the spectators.

(8) We make use of the hand a thousand different ways; only very little at the beginning of a discourse. Concerning this you may observe the rules following: (1) Never clap your hands nor thump the pulpit. (2) Use the right hand most; and when you use the left it be only to accompany the other. (3) The right hand may be gently applied to the breast when you speak of your own faculties, heart or conscience. (4) You must begin your action with your speech and end it when you make an end of speaking. (5) The hands should seldom be lifted higher than the eyes nor let down lower than the breast. (6) Your eyes should always have your hands in view, so that they to whom you speak may see your eyes, your mouth and your hands, all moving in concert with each other and expressing the same thing. (7) Seldom stretch out your arms sideways, more than a foot from the trunk of your body. (8) Your hands are not to be in perpetual motion: this the ancients called the babbling of the hands.

(9) There are many other things relating to action as well as utterance, which cannot easily be expressed in writing. These you must learn by practice; by hearing a good speaker and speaking often before him.

(10) But remember, while you are actually speaking, you must not be studying any other motions, but use those that naturally arise from the subject of your discourse, from the place where you speak and the characters of the persons whom you address.

(11) I would advise you, lastly, to observe these rules, as far as things permit, even in your common conversation, till you have got a perfect habit of observing them, so that they are, as it were, natural to you.

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

Chapter 25 **LETTER TO A YOUNG MINISTER ON CLOSET PRAYER** **by E. E. Shelhamer and Others** **Selected by A. Sims**

All the mighty men of God who have shaken the kingdom of darkness have been men of prayer. Moses pleaded until he had power to turn aside heaven's thunderbolt of wrath, although God had said, "Let me alone that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven." After long and powerful pleading Elijah shut and opened heaven. But I will not speak of what prophets, apostles and other inspired men have done through faith and prayer, lest you should be discouraged, although they were men "subject to like passions as we are."

Look, then, at Baxter, who stained his study walls with praying breath; and, after receiving a rich anointing from the Holy Ghost, he sent a river of living water through Kidderminster, and was the means of converting hundreds.

John Knox grasped all Scotland in his strong arms of faith. His prayers terrified tyrants. After much holy, faithful Closet pleading, Whitefield went to the devil's fair and took more than a thousand souls Out of the paw of the lion in one day. See praying Wesley, pleading Bramwell, Stoner, Smith and Carvosso, each of whom led thousands to Jesus; Ann Cutler and Mr. Fletcher, whose breath was prayer, and who had souls in every place. In 1820 and 1821, a few plain, holy, praying Christians were instrumental in leading 17,000 souls from Satan to Christ. John Oxtoby, with his one talent, sighed, wept, fasted and groaned and prayed for sinners many hours, pleading the atonement, and casting them on it by faith's strong arms; then, entering the pulpit, he spoke words of flame, so that hundreds were saved by his means.

If you only want sinners converted to gain a name in the church, to swell your party, or show what great feats you can do, God will not use you. Your state of soul is poor indeed.

If your heart is burdened and ready to break for the salvation of souls, and you feel willing to be anything -- even a fool in the eyes of a God-dishonoring world and of a sleepy church -- so that souls may be saved, then, if we knowing anything of the matter, you are in a proper state of soul to begin work for God. And if you have none of this yearning of heart for souls, alas! how are you anything better than a hireling shepherd? To strengthen your desire for the salvation of the lost, look at the multitudes around you hurrying on to a dark perdition. How many thousand within the pale of the professing Church who have nothing of religion but the name! and how many who have renounced even the name! They never open a Bible. They never enter a church. They never bend a knee. They live as heathen live -- as godless and as sensual as the sons of Athens and Rome in the olden time. How sad the thought! You are moving through time to eternity in the midst of a vast mass of perishing souls. They surround you on e very side. Go out, like Nehemiah, by night, and survey the desolations of the city. See the dramshops, and the pawnshops, and the dens of infamy, and the

gambling houses, and the many places of sinful amusement- Count, if you can, the number of their victims or realize the amount of the evil which, unitedly, they produce. Death and damnation are moving to meet them. Look, my brother, at the whole mass of sinners trampling under foot the redeeming blood of Christ, and steeling their consciences against the Holy Ghost: making God's Book a stepping-stone to hell. See them shut their eyes. Yes! they are emphatically in earnest to damn their bodies and souls for ever.

Look at them -- look at them -- LOOK AT THEM! Do you see them? Then you see them on a slippery hill, going down to hell! Think how they dishonor God. Think how they pierce the Savior. Think how they grieve the Holy Spirit. Think how they damn the rising race. Think how they people the wide, burning pit! See how they push one another off the stage of life into perdition! See! thousands of them have taken all but the last step; so that, if you do not pluck them thence at once, the next step will be hell, with all its remorse and despair, its blackness and darkness, its weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, and that forever, and forever! and FOREVER! Oh, brother, all this is true! and will you not use the weapon which God has Himself placed in your hands, and go and wrestle with Him to save this people? Think of the value of their souls! Think of the bleeding, pleading love they are slighting! Think of the eternal damnation they are going to! Think of the heaven of increasing glory they are all losing! Think of the influence they have in drawing millions after them to hell! Think what glory it would bring to God the Father, Son and Spirit, if you could be the means of their conversion! Think deeply earnestly and soberly, that there is but one alternative -- either a life of sin, or conversion to God -- a conversion that will empower them also to become instrumental in the salvation of others. Think of Gethsemane, Calvary, and the blood-sprinkled mercy seat! Think what Jesus has done, and is willing to do for them! Think of what H e has done for millions as bad as they, when they repented, forsook sin, and believed.

Think of what He did for bloody Manasseh, the murderer; mad Saul, wicked Magdalene, swearing Bunyan. the infidel Rochester, and millions of others -- thieves, drunkards, and the very worst of sinners, on this side the pit. Nay, think until your soul is harrowed up within you, and melts into pity or flames into burning charity. Then with your full, love-stricken heart, enter your closet and bewail the sins of the people before the Lord. Take up a deep lamentation, and bewail their lost condition and their aggravated sins. Make their sins your own, so to speak; that is, feel for them and pray for them, as though you were in their almost lost condition. Yoke yourself in with them. Be particular in confessing their sins. Do not cloak them. Like Moses, Daniel, Jeremiah, Paul, and other holy men, confess them again and again and again; while you are confessing and mourning over them, continue casting your soul and their sins on the atonement; recognize the infinite willingness of the Redeemer to save them, and plead with God to do it now. Plead the death of Jesus. Cast your strong-nerved arms of faith around sinners, and bring them to the cross of Calvary. Plead heaven, with its everlasting glory; hell, with its darkness, fire, and adamant chains. Plead the shortness of time; plead the length of endless eternity. Enter deeply and fully into their awful state. I do not want you to be a mere happy, joyful Christian; but one who drinks with Christ the bitter cup. But mind and do all in faith with a single eye to the glory of God; and, if you plead this way for hours you will soon learn the grand secret of shaking any town, and sending a wave of living water over the land. Christ says, "He that believeth, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Believe, then, and flood your district, no matter what stands in the way. If, while you are pleading, you only believe,

something great will be effected. Oh, for a few Moseses, Jeremiahs, or Pauls, to stand in the gap! --
From Grace to Glory, by A. Sims.

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

Chapter 26 PRACTICAL POINTS TO PREACHERS by Adam Clarke

[Transcriber Note: E. E. Shelhamer adapted this article, "Practical Points To Preachers," from "A Letter to a Preacher on His Entrance into the Work of the Ministry," by Adam Clarke. As originally written, the opening text was: "My Dear Friend." While largely borrowing from Clarke's original work, and attributing it to Clarke, E. E. Shelhamer has omitted some portions thereof and rearranged other portions. HDM has published the whole of Clarke's original work as hdm0073. Those wishing to read the entire work as originally written and arranged by Clarke are referred to that file.]

My Dear Brethren:

You are engaged in the most important work in the universe. Commissioned by God Almighty, you are sent to explain and enforce the mystery which had been hidden from former ages; that glorious scheme of salvation, the redemption of a lost world by the incarnation, sufferings, and death of Jesus Christ.

As you have, no doubt, deeply considered the nature of the work, and counted the cost; and have deliberately chosen your present employment, at the certain loss of every worldly prospect, and at the hazard of your life; permit one who has learned experience on a variety of points connected with a preacher's usefulness, and at no ordinary expense either (having had the pains to be often instructed through the medium of his own blunders), to give you the following advices:

1. "Be diligent; -- never be unemployed a moment; -- never be triflingly employed, -- never while away time: neither spend any more time at any place than is strictly necessary.
2. "Be serious. Let your motto be Holiness, to the Lord. Avoid all lightness, jesting, and foolish talking.
3. "Converse sparingly and cautiously with women; particularly young women.
4. "Take no step toward marriage without consulting with your brethren.
5. "Believe evil of no one; unless you see it done, take heed how you credit it. Put the best construction on every thing. You know, the judge is always supposed to be on the prisoner's side.
6. "Speak evil of no one: else your words especially would eat as doth a canker: keep your thoughts within your breast till you come to the person concerned.

7. "Tell every one what you think wrong in him, and that plainly, as soon as may be, else it will fester in your heart.

8. "Do not affect the gentleman. You have no more to do with this character than with that of a dancing master. A preacher of the gospel should be the servant of all.

9. "Be ashamed of nothing but sin: not of fetching wood or drawing water, if time permit: not of cleaning your own shoes, nor those of your neighbor.

10. "Be punctual: do every thing exactly at the time: and keep our rules, not for wrath, but for conscience sake.

11. "You have nothing to do but to save souls: therefore spend and be spent in this work: and go always, not only to those who want you, but to those who want you most.

12. "It is not your business to preach so many times, merely, or to take care of this or that society; but to save as many souls as you can: to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance, and with all your power to build them up in that holiness without which they cannot see the Lord."

You preach, not merely to explain God's Word, but to save souls: whenever you forget this you go astray.

I have known ministers, and of no mean note either, who seldom have a soul comforted under their ministry, merely because of their harsh, austere manner of preaching the gospel. Others, far their inferiors in point of ministerial qualifications, get souls for their hire wherever they come, principally (under God) through their affectionate manner of recommending the gospel of the grace of Christ. Of the former it has been justly said, They make even the promises of God too hot to be held.

Beware of discouraging the people; therefore avoid continually finding fault with them. This does very great hurt. There are some whose sermons impress nothing but terror; and though they point out the heights and depths of holiness, yet they leave the hearers no courage to follow on to know the Lord. There are others who become censors general of the different societies to whom they preach. This (imperceptibly to themselves) spoils their own tempers, begets a spirit of uncharitableness, and greatly injures their usefulness.

If you find a society fallen or falling, examine as closely as you can to find out all the good that is among them; and, copying Christ's conduct toward the seven Asiatic churches, preface all that you have to say, on the head of their backsliding, with the good that remains in them; and make that good which they still possess, the reason why they should shake themselves from the dust, take courage and earnestly strive for more. If you ground your exhortations to increasing diligence and zeal on what they have lost) instead of on what they yet possess, and may speedily gain) you miss your way and lose your labor. I tried the former way and it did no good. I abandoned it and adopted the latter, and God blessed it. Mr. Wesley used to give the significant appellation of "croakers," to those who were always telling the people, "Ye are fallen! ye are fallen!" and he observed that such injured the

work of God wherever they came. I have in general found that those who are most frequent in the above cry are such as have suffered loss in their own souls; and, taking a prospect of what is without, from a retrospect of what is within, they imagine that all they see are in the same apostate condition with themselves.

Man is naturally prone to act in extremes; therefore take good heed that while you avoid the above evil, you fall not into that other of slightly passing by the transgressions of the wicked or the backslidings of the people of God. Cases may occur that will require public and cutting reproof, but as I hinted before, in all such cases copy the example of our blessed lord to the seven Asiatic churches. There you have an infallible directory. May God help you to follow it!

1. Pulpit Manners

1. Go from your knees to the chapel. Get a renewal of your commission every time you go to preach, in a renewed sense of the favor of God. Carry your authority to declare the gospel of Christ, not in your hand but in your heart. When in the pulpit be always solemn, say nothing to make your congregation laugh. Remember you are speaking for eternity; and trifling is inconsistent with such awful subjects as the great God, the agony and death of Christ, the torments of hell, and the blessedness of heaven.

2. Never assume an air of importance while in the pulpit; you stand in an awful place and God hates the proud man. Never be boisterous or dogmatic. Let your demeanor prove that you feel that you are speaking before Him who tries the spirit, and to whom you are responsible for every word you utter. Self-confidence will soon lead to a forgetfulness of the presence of God, and then you speak your own words and perhaps in your own spirit, too.

3. Avoid all quaint and fantastic attitudes. I once knew a young man who, through a bad habit which he had unfortunately acquired, made so many antics, as the people termed them, in the pulpit, as to prejudice and grieve many. A very serious and sensible person who constantly heard him really thought he was afflicted with that species of paralysis termed St. Vitus' dance, and hearing some blame him, entered seriously on his defense, on the ground of its being the visitation of God! As there are a thousand reasons why a young man should not wish the people to form such an opinion of him, so there is all the reason in the world why he should avoid queer nodding, ridiculous stoopings and erections of his body, skipping from side to side of the desk, knitting his brows, and every other theatrical or foppish air which tends to disgrace the pulpit and to render himself contemptible.

4. Never shake or flourish your handkerchief; this is abominable; nor stuff it into your bosom; this is unseemly. Do not gaze about on your congregation before you begin your work; if you take a view of them at all, let it be as transient as possible.

5. Endeavor to gain the attention of your congregation. Remind them of the presence of God. Get their spirits deeply impressed with the truth, Thou, God, seest me! and assure them, "He is in the midst, not to judge, but to bless them; and that they should wait as for eternity, for now is the day

of salvation." I have ever found that a few words of this kind spoken before the sermon have done very great good.

6. You may easily find many treatises written on the Gift of Preaching, the Eloquence of the Pulpit, the Composition of a Sermon, etc., both in your own language and in foreign tongues; and he who has a good judgment may profit by them. But I must confess, all I have ever read on the subject has never conveyed so much information to my mind as the original, and in my opinion, the only proper mode of preaching, as Nehemiah 8:8, "So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense and caused them to understand the reading."

First, They read in the book q the law of God. The words of God are the proper matter of preaching, for they obtain the wisdom of the Most High and reveal to man the things which make for his peace.

Secondly, They read distinctly; they analyzed, dilated and expounded it at large.

Thirdly, They gave the sense, i. e., showed its importance and utility.

Fourthly, They caused them to understand the reading; and they understood) had a mental taste and perception of the things which were in the reading, i. e., in the letter and spirit of the text.

7. Shun all controversies about politics. It is not the bread which God has provided for His children; and from the pulpit, it is neither profitable for doctrine, for reproof, nor for instruction in righteousness. If others will bring this chaff into the house of God, copy them not.

8. A sentence or two of affectionate prayer in different parts of the discourse has a wonderful tendency to enliven it, and to make the people hear with concern and interest. On this subject, a great foreign orator gives the ministers of the gospel the following advice: "When you have proved the truth of the principles you laid down, you have done but little of the great ministerial work. It is from this point, the proof of your doctrine, that you are to set out to triumph over the passions of your auditory; to strip the sinner of every subterfuge and excuse, that conviction may lead him to repentance. To produce this effect, leave your proofs and divisions behind you; address yourself to the conscience in powerful interrogatives; repeat nothing that you have before said; you have now to produce a new effect, and must use a new language. Employ the utmost energy of your soul to show them that happiness is to be found nowhere but in God. What should I say more? Forget method, forget art itself. Lift up your soul in affectionate prayer to God; become the intercessor of your auditory, that the multitude which withstood your menaces, may be constrained to yield to the effusions of your love."

9. While I have you in the pulpit, I will give you a concluding advice relative to this part of the business. Never ape any person, however eminent he may be for piety or ministerial abilities. Every man has a fort, as it is called, of his own; and if he keep within it, he is impregnable. The providence of God has caused many of the natural manners of men to differ as much as their persons; and it is nearly as impossible for a man to imitate the peculiar manners of another, as it is to assume his features. It is on this account that no one has ever succeeded who has endeavored to copy another,

and as the aiming to do it is easily discoverable, the man who acts thus is despicable in the eyes of the people. And that man is justly despised by others, who has so far despised himself and his Maker, as to endeavor to throw off his natural self in order to act another man's character.

II. Circuit Manners

1. Never disappoint a place: this would be contrary to your covenant with God, your agreement with your brethren, and your engagement to the people. Keep your own watch always to true time and begin precisely at the time appointed. Never be a minute later than true time, except in the country, where there is no public clock: then five minutes may be allowed for the difference between clocks and watches. But these five minutes may be as well before as after common time in other places. Do not many preachers of all denominations sin against God and their own souls by not attending to this? You publish preaching for such a time and you do not come in till considerably after; and this is your usual custom. Then (harsh as the saying may appear) you are certainly a habitual and public liar. I never knew a preacher who acted in this way who did not lose the confidence of the people to such a degree as essentially to injure his public usefulness. Add to this that the congregations are ever ruined by such conduct.

2. Be punctual in getting in proper time to the place where you are to dine and lodge. Do not make a whole family wait upon you. This is both injustice and insolence. While I readily grant, with our blessed Lord, that the laborer is worthy of his meat, yet he should certainly come to receive it in due time; and he who habitually neglects this, disappointing and confusing the families wherever he comes, is not worthy of a morsel of bread. I have known some, of more than common ministerial abilities, lose their importance and ruin themselves in the opinion of the people, by their want of punctuality in this respect.

3. Never leave any place you visit without reading a portion of the Scripture and praying with the family; and seize the most convenient time for family prayer in the houses where you lodge. Just before they sit down to meat is, in my opinion, the best time. Then the several members of the family are generally present. But I have often observed that one and another, after having hurried down their victuals, have either gone, or have been called away to business; so that before the whole family had finished their meal, one-third of the members of it were not to be found. There are, it is true, some families so well regulated that this secession is never permitted; yet even among these, I have always found it the best way to have prayer before meals and especially at the breakfast hour. Should you be invited to any place where you are not permitted to pray with the family, never go thither again; and give them your reason. An ambassador of God should be transacting the business of his Master whithersoever he goes; and where he is not permitted to do it, there God has not sent him.

4. If you wish to keep a good conscience you must walk as in the presence of God. Extremes beget extremes. Take heed, then, that while you avoid levity on the one hand, you fail not into sour godliness on the other. There are some who have the unhappy art of making a jest out of everything, and even apply Scripture in this way. Such conduct is execrable. There are others who, being of an unhappy cast of mind, through a kind of natural or factitious melancholy, strip a man of salvation for a smile, and condemn him to the pit for being cheerful. Avoid both these extremes and remember

that levity will ape religious cheerfulness, and sourness of temper will endeavor to pass itself off for Christian gravity.

5. Tell your trials and temptations to very few. Your weaknesses, etc., should be known only to God and yourself. No one should be trusted except that friend whom you know well, and to whom you can at all times trust even your life. I have known some who were telling their trials, weaknesses, etc., everywhere; the consequence was they were despised or pitied without being esteemed.

6. Wherever you go, discountenance that disgraceful custom (properly enough termed), Bibliomancy, i. e., divination by the Bible. I need scarcely observe that this consists in what is called dipping into the Bible, taking passages of Scripture at hazard and drawing indications thence concerning the present and future state.

7. Never go in debt for food, clothes or anything else; it is no sin to die in a ditch through hunger or cold, but it is a crime to go in debt when there is not the fullest prospect of being able to pay. It is the most certain and honorable way, never to sit down to the food, nor put on the clothes, till the bills for both are discharged. By these means you will keep clear of the world and make most of the little you have. Every word of the old adage is true: "Live not on trust, for that is the way to pay double."

8. Never choose a circuit for yourself. If you do, and succeed in getting the object of your choice, make up your mind to bear all the crosses alone which you may meet with in it: for how can you look to God for strength to support you under trials which you may reasonably conclude are of your own procuring?

9. Get a genuine friend whenever you can and prize him much when you have got him. Beware of forming hasty friendships; they are seldom solid. Confide little in the person who suddenly professes uncommon affection for you. He may be sincere; but depend upon it, he will not be steady. Remember the proverb, Hot love is soon cold. Those who form hasty friendships are always fickle.

If you have a friend who takes offense at trifles break entirely with him, for he is not to be trusted.

III. Domestic Manners

1. On your arrival, get as speedily as possible to private prayer; and earnestly beg God to bless your coming -- to bless you -- to the family, and to the congregation, so that you may leave that place with an increase of spiritual life, and with the comfortable satisfaction of having been a messenger of peace to that house and to the people of that place.

Show yourself satisfied with everything you receive. Be not nice in your food. Do not keep a lordly distance from the family. Be so familiar with them as to gain their confidence that you may the better succeed in talking with them concerning their souls. At the same time keep a due distance, that while you are esteemed as a brother in Christ, you may be acknowledged as His minister.

2. Give the family where you lodge as little trouble as possible. Never desire any of them, not even the servants, to do things for you that you can conveniently do for yourself. It is an odious thing for a person whose character should be the servant of all, pressing everybody into his service; giving unnecessary trouble wherever he comes; turning a house upside down; and being dissatisfied with everything that is done for him. I have always seen that those who require most attendance are the most difficult to be pleased; for they are generally of a proud or discontented spirit. and such a spirit is never satisfied. A man of a truly Christian and noble mind finds it his highest interest to have few wants, and esteems it a luxury to minister to his own necessities.

3. Never pull off your boots, shoes or gaiters in a parlor or sitting room. Leave your hat, whip, great-coat, etc., in the hall, lobby or some such place. Do not leave your foul linen, dirty clothes, shoes, etc., about in the room where you lodge. After having left your bed un covered for some time to cool and air, lay on the clothes neatly when you quit your room; and always throw up your windows when you go out. Empty the basin in which you have washed your hands, etc., and leave it always clean. Don't splash the walls nor the floor. Wipe every drop of water off the washstand and spread your towel always to dry; and when dry, fold it loosely up and place it on the head of the water bottle. Never comb out hair in a sitting room or before company; this is unpardonable vulgarity; nor brush your clothes in a bedroom; this spoils the furniture. See that you spill no ink on the floors, table, etc. Leave everything in the place where you found it, and habituate yourself to put every chair you Sit on in its proper place when you rise. Remember, that cannot be considered as a small thing to you which either prejudices a family against you, or is instrumental in acquiring you their good graces.

4. Shun tea-drinking visits; these, in general, murder time and can answer no good purpose either to your body or soul. Thirty-seven years ago I met with Mr. Wesley's Letter on Tea. I read it and resolved from that hour to drink no more of the juice of that herb till I could answer his arguments and objections. I have seen that tract but once since; yet from that day until now, I have not drunk a cup of tea or coffee. For these things I mostly found a substitute in the morning; and when I could not, I cheerfully went without breakfast; and in their place I never took anything in the evening. By this line of conduct, I have not only joined hands with God to preserve a feeble constitution, but I can demonstrate that I have actually saved SEVERAL whole YEARS of time which otherwise must have been irrecoverably lost; and perhaps my soul with them: for I have often had occasion to observe that tea-drinking visits open the floodgates of various temptations. How can these exclaim against needless self-indulgence and waste of time who go out on such occasions in the evenings! It is a mystery to me which I never wish to be able to unravel, how men can act in this way and preach afterward! I have often wondered that this matter is never spoken of to the young preachers when they are admitted. But who can, with propriety, warn them against this evil? Only those who are guiltless -- and where are they?

5. Go out as little as possible to eat and drink. Why IS the positive command of Christ on this head so generally disregarded? "Go not from house to house" (Luke 10:7). The acting contrary to this precept has often brought great disgrace on the gospel of God. Stay in your own lodgings as much as possible that you may have time for prayer and study. I have heard pious people (who received the preachers of the gospel into their houses) remark that they always found that preacher to be "most useful who kept most in his closet." Seldom frequent the tables of the rich or great. If you do, it will

unavoidably prove a snare to you: the unction of God will perish from your mind and your preaching be only a dry, barren repetition of old things.

Visit the people and speak to them about their souls as often and as much as you can; but be not at the mercy of every invitation to go out for a morsel of bread. If you take not this advice you will do no good, get no good, and utterly evaporate your influence.

IV. Concerning Marriage

1. I feel little encouragement to hazard any advice upon this subject. In general, people do not in this matter consult their own judgment, nor receive the counsel of their friends, but act according to the impulse of their passions. It is almost the only case in the concerns of human life where reason and prudence are obliged to be inactive, and where they are, notwithstanding, most interested. However, a Christian should act otherwise; and a Christian minister who is not delivered out of the hands of his own passions is a disgrace to the sacred character he bears. I was always an advocate for marriage; and as I have tried that state for more than thirty years and have been blessed with a good wife and with twelve children, it is no wonder that I should continue to recommend it.

I say, by all means get married; for I am satisfied that few men can be truly comfortable who live a single life. But remember, your everlasting all may depend upon the choice you make. Seek for genuine piety -- nothing can compensate for the lack of this: look for sound sense and an agreeable manner -- that while your wife is a help to you, she may not, by her awkward behavior, be disgusting to others. Good natural tempers are of great consequences. Get a wife who possesses these before she was brought to God: and should she at any time lose ground in religion, her good natural disposition will still remain and your comfort will not be materially interrupted. But when a woman who has had bad natural tempers loses that life of God by which they were controlled or kept at bay, she become intolerable. Avoid a person of this character, though as rich as Croesus and as beautiful as an angel.

Let the person be nearly of your own age. A young man marrying an old woman and an old man marrying a child, are both an abomination to common sense and reason. Your wife should ever be considered as your equal, and therefore should not be of such an age in reference to you as might demand the respect of a mother or the correction of a child.

Don't seek for money: it is a shocking reproach to a man of God to be hunting after self and getting a wife merely for the sake of her possessions. I scruple not to say that those who marry for money are committing adultery as long as they live. I say nothing concerning beauty, etc., but would just observe that a man who is himself of a homely appearance should not be nice in the choice of a wife; and that a pious, sensible woman of a good natural disposition, be she ever so ordinary, is an inestimable treasure. Beware of a woman that meddles with politics or with the government of the Church of God. Such a one cannot fail to embroil you with the people wherever you go and will be a source of misery to you as long as you breathe.

Marriage to you can never be an indifferent thing: it will make or mar you; it will be a blessing or a curse to you. It will either help you to heaven, drive you to hell, or be a heart-rending cross to

you while you live. Nor will a bad or improper marriage affect yourself alone: it may be the ruin of every child that issues from it. And, dreadful as this evil is, it will not rest there; they may propagate the plague to interminable generations; and millions be injured, if not lost, by your improper or vicious marriage. Add to this, that as far as you are connected with the work of God, it will be a great hindrance, a deep blot, and a leprous curse to the church of Christ. I have heard it asserted by a sensible man, a keen observer of human nature, and one intimately acquainted with religious people, that "some of the direst evils that threaten the present revival of religion are deducible from this source. Young ministers have rushed in shoals into the net; and I cannot add," said he, "For all there are so many, yet is not the net broken.' They are entangled in the meshes; but, alas! [even when] the net is broken! They are neither brought to land, nor are free in the water. They have little domestic happiness; they present no edifying example."

Think of these possible evils -- examine the circle of your acquaintance, and see them realized. Look before you leap.

Take this step with that godly fear and scrupulous caution which a man should do who feels he has his all at stake. If God direct you not, you will draw in a fearful lottery, where there are many blanks to one prize. And what I say to young men here, I would say to young women also, were they the objects of my instruction.

2. I need lay down no rules for your treatment of your wife; for if you do not truly love her, rules would be mere cobwebs to you. One thing I must say, that when you are in company, you should pay as much attention to your wife as to any person present; avoiding at the same time, that puerile monkeyish fooling and toying which is a disgrace to man and an insult to a sensible woman.

3. Abuel Fazl, author of the *Ayar Danish* (Touchstone of Wisdom), gives the following advice to a person who was going to marry: "Take (says he) the daughter of a religious, friendly man whom you may make your confidant on all occasions. But have nothing to say to three kinds of women: 1. A widow if she be always extolling her deceased husband. 2. A woman whose relatives have conferred great favors upon you. And, 3, one who, whenever she sees you, speaks in a faint tone and affects a delicate, languid air."

4. If ever God should bless you with children, see that you dedicate them unreservedly to Him. Never dress them in the fashion, i.e., the unmeaning, unnecessary, and absurd foppery of the times. Give them no red shoes, glaring buttons, &c. This fills them with pride, and debases their minds; for by this mode of conduct they are taught to attach a value to things which are of no intrinsic worth; and false perceptions and ideas, impressed upon the mind in so tender an age, are rarely obliterated through the whole course of life.

5. Never, or very rarely, take them out with you to dine, &c., for the following reasons: 1. Because they are generally too much indulged by getting food, which in quantity and quality is injurious to their health. 2. Being treated better abroad than at home, necessary domestic restraint becomes irksome to them, and they would rather be anywhere else than in their parents' house. 3. By being too much indulged among strangers, they acquire too great a degree of forwardness; which, for lack of judgment, often degenerates into intolerable impudence. 4. They give great trouble to the families

where they come; by which you cannot fail being brought into contempt, especially when you make it a custom to take them where they are neither asked nor desired.

6. Concerning that abominable and fatal drain of human life, the pipe and the quid, I need here say nothing. My opinion has long since been before the public. I am sorry to say that I know several young men who are to this day murdering themselves in this way

7. Wash your face, hands and feet often: and neglect not every morning to rinse your mouth with cold water and to cleanse your teeth well with a soft brush. He that begins this custom early and continues in it will never have the toothache nor an offensive breath. If you have a bad digestion, or should your meat lie ordinarily heavy upon your stomach, observe the following rules: Never eat to repletion; leave off while you have an appetite for more; and let not a morsel of any kind of food enter your stomach till you have chewed it as small as possible. This saves the stomach at least one-half of its ordinary labor; and remember, what all should know, and what few properly observe, that it is for this very end that the God of nature gave you your teeth.

8. These may appear to be small things; but they are matters of the utmost importance. You perceive I have recommended no medicine because I believe nature, if she gets fair play, will require very little medical assistance; avoid all quack medicines as you would the pestilence. Let your moderation in all things be known unto all; the Lord is at hand.

Finally, live for eternity and be every moment prepared to meet your God. I leave these advices with you and earnestly commend you to God and the word of His grace which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all them who are sanctified; and am affectionately, your companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus.

Adam Clarke

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

Chapter 27

DUTIES OF A MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL

by Thomas Coke, First Bishop of the Methodist Church

[Transcriber Note: This work was apparently taken from "Coke On The Ministry, Four Discourses On The Duties Of A Minister of the Gospel" by Thomas Coke, LL.D., and it appears that E. E. Shelhamer has re-arranged some portions taken from Coke's original work. Those who wish to examine Thomas Coke's original documents are referred to thee hdm0078 file. -- DVM]

The man who engages in the work of the ministry is not merely accountable to God for his own soul, but becomes responsible also for the souls of those who have been committed to his care. The sacred writings have guarded his office with the most awful sanctions. Both promises and threatenings conspire to keep alive his hopes and fears, by holding out in the most pointed language, the rewards or punishments which await him in a future world. On the one hand, we are assured that "they who turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars forever and ever;" while, on the other hand, we are clearly informed that "those watchmen who see the sword coming and neglect to give the people warning shall have their blood required at their hands."

The purity of Christianity, wherever it has flourished, never has begun to decay but with the fall of the ministry, and disorder has generally begun at the house of God. Thus it is in a considerable measure we who decide, if I may so speak, on the salvation or damnation of the people. We are so situated that we can neither stand nor fall alone: the destiny of those souls over whom we are set is, in a considerable degree, awfully attached to ours! Certainly, my brethren, a bad minister is the greatest plague which the wrath of God can suffer to spring up among any people. The corruption of the ministry has always been the grand source of the corruption of a people.

We have had our Wesleys, our Fletchers, our Grinshaws, and our Walshes. Everything was borne down by their holy eloquence, and by the power of the Spirit of God who spoke through them. The villages, the towns, the cities could not resist the impetuosity of their zeal and the eminent sanctity of their lives; the tears, the sighs, and the deep compunction of those who heard them were the commendations which accompanied their ministry. The strictness of their manners left nothing for the world to say against the truths which they delivered. The simplicity of their spirit and the gentleness of their conversation and conduct toward others, but severity toward themselves, belied not the gospel of which they were ministers. Their examples instructed, persuaded and struck the people almost as much as their sermons, and the Spirit of God, who inflamed their hearts, the divine fire with which they themselves were filled, spread through the coldest and most insensible souls and enabled them almost everywhere to raise chapels -- temples to God, where the penitents and believers might assemble to hear them and each return inflamed like themselves and filled with the abundance of the Spirit of God. Oh, what good is one apostolic man capable of working upon earth!

"Nothing is more opposed," says St. Chrysostom, "to the spirit of the ministry to which the Church of Christ has joined us than a quiet and retired life, which many erroneously regard as the kind of life the most sublime and perfect." No sooner does everything commodious in the present life offer its tempting baits, but with too many, that fire of zeal, that flame of love for the salvation of souls, vanishes away like the morning dew, to the astonishment of the discerning beholder. No, my brethren, let us not deceive ourselves; for, as I have already said and must repeat again, however well regulated the life of such a minister may seem, he has but the appearance of piety; he has not the foundation and truth of it; he seems to live, but he is dead in the sight of God: men perhaps may praise him, but God curses him: the regularity of his life now lulls him to sleep; but a terrible sound and the clamors of the souls which he suffered to perish shall one day awaken him thoroughly.

"You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work; go always not only to those that want, but to those that want you most. Observe! It is not your business only to preach so many times and to take care of this or that study, but to save as many souls as you can; to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance, and with all your power to build them up in that holiness without which they cannot see the Lord."

I. Reproof a Christian Duty

Depend on it, my brethren, it always costs us something of the dignity and holy gravity of our office to purchase the friendship and suffrages of men of the world: it is not they who will abate of their prejudices and false maxims to unite themselves to us: it is we only, who must abate the holy rules of the gospel to be admitted to their societies.

I. Reproof a Christian Duty

And need I here remind you, brethren, of that peculiar characteristic of the Methodists, that they are a race of reprovers. It is their reproach, it is their honor, it is the glory of the cross they bear, that every Christian of every sect and party who dares become a reprover of vice is immediately stigmatized with the name of Methodist. May we never lose that cross, that glory, till vice is banished from the world and "the earth is full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea!"

A minister of the gospel is a public character, charged with the interests of the glory of God and the honor of religion among men; he ought, therefore, never to suffer men of the world, whoever they may be, to pass without a bold, though holy reproof, when the respect due to the majesty of God is wounded, when the precious and sublime doctrines of the gospel are treated with derision, when vice is justified, or holiness and virtue turned into ridicule; in short, when impiety in discourse dishonors the presence of God and the presence of His ministers. Ah! it is then that the piety and dignity of a minister should no more prescribe to him any other measure or bounds but that of zeal -- the zeal which is the flame of love mixed with the just indignation of a lover of God. It is then that, charged by his office with the interests of religion, he should know no one after the flesh: he should forget the names, the titles, the distinctions of those who forget themselves; he should remember that he is appointed of God a preacher of righteousness and endued with power from heaven to oppose all manner of sin, and especially to set himself with a sacred intrepidity against that impious and

detestable pride which would exalt itself against the knowledge of God. Whatever persons they be who do not treat with respect in your presence that which is the most respectable of all things in the universe should not be respected by you. We ought to hear them with that kind of indignation with which we believe Christ Himself would have heard them. I am persuaded that the pointed strength of reproof is the only kind of propriety which our character then imposes upon us: we are not then required to use soft expressions, "Nay, my son, it is no good report that I hear." Whether they will hear or whether they will forbear, we should deliver our own souls.

Oh, that I could impress these important truths with the fullest conviction upon all our hearts! What a flame would soon be kindled in the world! What could not a thousand traveling preachers in Europe and America do for their Master, if all were thoroughly filled with this spirit of holy zeal! But should we confine our observation to these alone? Certainly our local preachers, exhorters and even our leaders are, in their respective degrees, called to reprove, rebuke and exhort.

There is nothing, therefore, my brethren, more deceitful than the idea of gaining the esteem and good opinion of the world by familiarizing ourselves and mixing often with it. The more the world sees us, except in our public duties, the more will it either bate or despise us. It hates us from the instant it feels that we will not put up with its manners. Let us very rarely have anything to do with it, and we shall appear in its eyes with greater dignity and be treated with greater respect. Let us attend to every due and proper call which the world may justly require of us as well as to all the demands of charity and good works; but let us always conduct ourselves as the ambassadors of Jesus Christ, as in some sense filling His place.

We must die to the world or partake of its spirit. We cannot serve God and mammon. "The Methodist preachers," said the late Rev Charles Wesley to me once, "do not fully consider all the blessings of their situation; "one of the greatest of which," added he, "is that wall of contempt with which you are surrounded and which preserves you from a thousand temptations to which the clergy in general are exposed, by keeping the world at a distance from you.

The cares, the solitudes, the employments of the world, when you enter into them, will rob you of your unction, however your natural or improved talents may remain, and will not only profane, but in time entirely destroy all the genuine virtue of your vocation and bring you thoroughly under the yoke of the world. The vessels and ornaments which were used in the temple under the law were never appropriated to common use; it would have been a crime which would have defiled their consecration.

O, thou holy doctrine of the cross, how little art thou known by those ministers who enter into the affairs, agitations and commotions of this miserable world! The apostle has warned them in vain, that "no man who warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."

Nothing, my brethren, so softens the firmness and fidelity of the ministerial spirit as the busy commerce of the world. We enter by little, and imperceptibly, into its prejudices, its excuses and all its vain reasonings. The more we meddle with it, the less we find it culpable. We can at last even plead for its softness, its idleness, its luxury and its ambition. We begin, like the world, to give soft

names to all these passions and indulgences. It requires strength of grace to pardon an injury; to speak all the good we can of those who calumniate us; or to bide the defects of those who would destroy our reputation or usefulness. It requires strength of grace to fly from a world which allures us; to snatch ourselves from pleasures or to oppose inclinations which would draw us into evil; to resist customs to which the usage of the world has given the authority of laws or to use prosperity in a Christian spirit. It requires strength of grace to conquer ourselves; to repress the rising desire; to stifle the pleasing sentiments. In a word, the whole life of a true disciple of Jesus Christ bears the character of the cross; and if we lose for an instant this strength of grace, we fall. To say, then, that you cannot endure afflictions because you are weak, is to say that you are destitute of the spirit of the gospel.

He is like a skillful surgeon, who has pity indeed on the cries and sufferings of his patient, and yet cuts to the quick all that he finds corrupted in the wound; he is never more kind or beneficent to his servants than when he appears to be most severe; and it is indubitably evident that afflictions are necessary and useful to us, since a God so good and so kind can resolve to lay them upon us.

If the sacred writings, by which we shall be judged, make every idle word a transgression; if the gospel exacts from every private Christian such circumspection, reserve and modesty in his conversation -- what does it not require from the immediate ministers of Jesus Christ! The lips of ministers are, next to the Word of God, the depositories of divine knowledge, which they are incessantly to administer to the people.

II. Prayer a Mighty Force

We are my brethren, divinely appointed to combat the vices and unruly passions of the world, to destroy the empire of the devil among men and to establish and to extend the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Our ministry snatches us from external repose and clothes us with armor, but our arms are only faith and prayer working by love. It is from these divine arms, under grace, that all our instructions, all our labors and all our efforts derive their whole strength and success. Without these, we are but weak, rash men. I appeal to you, my brethren, for the truth of my observation, that a holy minister, as a man of prayer, with only moderate talents, will be more successful, will leave his congregation more affected and influenced by his discourse, than many others whose talents are vastly superior, but who have not by prayer drawn down that unction, that tender taste of piety) which alone knows how to speak to the heart. Without the Divine Unction the whole is but as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. The preacher speaks only to the ears of his audience, or at best to their understandings, merely because the Spirit of God speaks not by his mouth. The spirit by which he speaks and which animates his tongue is not that spirit of unction, of force, of fire, which as it formerly moved on the face of the waters, so now moves upon the passions of the heart quiet in its sins, troubles it, agitates it, and then separates it and clears up the chaos. It is in vain for him to thunder or borrow his zeal from without -- throughout the whole, he only, as the Apostle speaks, "beats the air."

No, my brethren! Take from a minister the spirit of prayer, and you take from him his soul, his strength, his life: he is no more than a dead carcass which quickly infects those who approach it.

Though every genuine Christian is a king and priest to God and the Father, ministers especially are the public conduit pipes through which the divine grace and blessings run to the people.

A minister who lives not in the spirit and exercise of prayer, who prays only in a formal manner at set seasons to satisfy a hardened conscience, is no pastor: he is a stranger who is nowise interested by the wants of his flock; the people who are intrusted to his care are not his children; they are poor orphans without a father; his heart, his bowels say nothing in their behalf. He fills the place of a holy Shepherd whose prayers would have drawn down a thousand blessings on the poor flock, and is absolutely guilty, in a great degree, of all the crimes which the prayers of a holy man would have prevented. Examine, therefore, if you be faithful in representing to God all the wants of your people; if you be solicitous, importunate to draw down upon them the gracious regard of a good God. Oh, brethren, the fervent prayers of a faithful pastor are rarely useless. That God who has charged us to pray for our people has also promised to hear us.

Let us, my brethren, lay to heart these sacred truths. Let us never lose sight of them through the course of our lives. The spirit of prayer is the essential spirit of Christianity. But it is the SOUL, THE SUBSTANCE, the LIFE of a GOSPEL MINISTRY. In short, a real minister of the gospel is a man of prayer. Prayer is his grand employment, his safety, his first and perpetual duty; and I may add is, under grace, the grand source of his consolation. Our instructions will be always barren if they be not watered with our tears and prayers. Even if our gifts be small, but we support them by our prayers, our defects will be, in a great measure, supplied, and divine unction become the blessed substitute.

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

Chapter 28 **AN ADDRESS TO THE CLERGY** **by Daniel Wilson, D. D.** **Bishop of Calcutta, March, 1829**

To preach aright, is not to discuss coldly a topic, is not to indulge in metaphysical statements, is not to court human applause, is not to move the passions by earthly eloquence it is a much higher thing: it is to give a tongue to prophets and apostles, it- is to make truth intelligible, forcible, triumphant : it is to give to the written doctrine the tenderness and pathos, the authority and force, with which it was first clothed by the inspired authors.

Who are the first to reform, if not the ministers of the sanctuary? And in what are they to amend their ways, if not in the preaching of the Word?

I. Importance of House to House Visitation

We have confined ourselves to preaching, to ecclesiastical duties, to occasional visits to the sick, to the administration of the sacraments; but what have we done in personal care and direction, in going from house to house, in visiting every family and individual in our districts, in becoming well acquainted with the character, the wants, and the state of heart, the habits, the attendance on public worship, the observation of the Sabbath, the instruction of children and servants, the family devotions of each house? And yet all this ought to have been done, and must be done, if a general revival of religion is to be expected. It is when we come to them in private and individually, and with all the influence which affection and character and official station give, that we touch the conscience.

And consider, brethren, how many there are, in every neighborhood, who never come to the public church -- consider the masses of people in our larger towns, who must be sought out by the minister of grace -- consider the numbers who are detained at home by illness and infirmity, or by the bad arrangement of family concerns -- consider, in short, that in your churches you collect only the better sort of people, those in whom some good habits, some parental care, some force of conscience operates; but that those who most need your instruction lie hid in the retirement and insensibility which can only be reached by direct and personal inquiry. Every family who will receive you -- and almost all will -- should be visited.

The immediate good effects of such labor will be incalculable. You will be able to apply and send home your public sermons to the conscience of each person. You will induce them to attend church with more constancy and interest, as expecting to be visited afterward. Then the minister thus acquires knowledge of the human heart rapidly; collects materials -- the best materials -- for his sermons; learns simplicity in his style; is enabled to divide and apportion out the word of truth with more discrimination, and nourishes his own heart and his personal religion -- his private studies and meditations are made more fruitful, more devotional. One half hour's practical study of the human

heart in personal visits, gives an impulse to ten hours speculative meditation from books and authors. Nothing will more tend to produce sound and solid success in our ministry. Our estimate of what constitutes a real blessing will rise. Our excessive reliance on mere preaching will be moderated. Our hasty conclusions of good being done, because people will crowd to a popular sermon, will listen to an intellectual and manly discussion, will be moved by fervid appeals, will yield to the affection of a preacher's manner, entertain ministers at their table, admire and defend them in private, follow many parts of their advice, etc., -- these hasty conclusions, from such equivocal marks, will be corrected. We shall estimate success by solid conversion, by a change of heart and character, by the love of Christ, by a regard to eternal things, by a crucifixion of the old man and a consistent obedience to the will of God. These effects have the stamp of heaven; and when the Holy Ghost begins extensively to grant these to us, a revival of religion is begun and all the highest ends of the ministry are accomplished,

We live in a day of external peace. We live in a time of much evangelical profession. The gospel is in a certain way fashionable. Our danger, therefore, lies peculiarly on the side of the world, of ease, indulgence, pride, conformity to the opinion of others; display in dress, in furniture, in houses; a life of external propriety, without much self-denial or spirituality. We must, then, maintain a decided superiority to all secular considerations, if we would fulfill the duties already suggested, and glorify Christ. We must despise the frowns, and shun the smiles, and avoid the maxims, and dread the benumbing influence of the world. We must be well aware of the surprising tendency there is in every human heart to lukewarmness, to the love of praise, to secular importance, and the gratification of the flesh.

No man can keep his standing without constant prayer and watchfulness. In a day of peace, ambition, love of power, sordid covetousness, the lording it over God's heritage, the complacency of a public situation, the secret delight in considering our works, our congregations, our parishes, our influence, steal upon the heart unperceived. The world in all its forms is in direct hostility with the spiritual church. "Filthy lucre" is again and again condemned by St. Paul, as the especial snare of the clergy. Pride, and dominion over the faith of the people, is again and again held forth by him for our warning.

II. The Danger of Ease-Taking

Another peculiar danger of the world arises from its biasing the decisions of the judgment. The practices which we loudly condemned, are tolerated, excused, defended. The resolutions we made in early life appear harsh and impracticable. We are now of the opinion that this and that thing is lawful; we now judge such and such practices expedient; we now conclude and resolve that there is no harm in this and the other indulgence. Thus Satan gains a footing in the heart; earthly things obtain possession, Christ and His doctrine are enfeebled, the pity we once felt for souls has lost its tone, our self-denial is gone, and we are like salt which has lost its savor. Brethren, let us awake to our danger ere it be too late. Let us shake ourselves from the slumbers of a worldly state. Let us dread the magical enchantment of earthly objects. Let us take heed and beware of covetousness and surfeiting and the pleasures of this life. If a revival of religion is our object and our desire, we must begin at home; we must cultivate a spiritual, a retired, a heavenly religion. Never can we call our people to leave that world to which we are looking back ourselves.

Mere decency, mere kindness of heart, mere common uprightness, in a minister of the gospel, is treachery to the peculiar trust reposed in him. Nothing can be indifferent which he does. He is the instrument and cause of the condemnation of his people, unless he is positively employing all his powers for their salvation. Consider, dear reader, can anything be more opposed to the simple character of a herald of Christ, than a mere taste for eloquent literature, the mere labor of a scientific student, the mere ardor of the philosopher or a historian? Was it for this you undertook the care of souls? Is it for this you desert your closet, your sick chambers, your private devotional duties? Believe it, the pride of human knowledge indisposes more to the humbling truths and precepts of the Christian ministry than almost any other passion. The soul is barren, the heart is filled with vanity, the habits are worldly. A literary spirit in a minister of Christ is direct rebellion against the first claims of his high office. The spirit of the servant of God is not literature, but piety; not vanity and conceit, but lowliness of heart; not idle curiosity, but sound and solid knowledge; not philosophy, but the Bible; not the pursuit of natural discoveries, but the care of souls, the glory of Christ, the progress of the gospel; not science, but salvation.

The external orthodoxy of the present day evaporates all the life of the divine doctrine, leaves man to his natural powers, fills him with pride and self-conceit, is content with a dead faith and a worldly life, neglects the care of souls, and builds up a proud self-righteousness on the foundation of human merit. This lukewarm temper is an enemy to spiritual religion, and to the revival of it, because such topics condemn the lukewarmness of the age as the greatest provocation that can be offered to God. Oh, if it should please the Almighty Savior to revive His work among the clergy, the very first effect would be the detection of the evils of this self-confident, worldly spirit,

Remember, finally, dear brethren, for with this admonition I will conclude, that Satan, our great adversary, will peculiarly resist all attempts at a revival of Christianity. It is death to his kingdom. A cold orthodoxy he can bear with. A literary spirit he can turn to his own purposes. A merely decent, benevolent person, with the name of a clergyman, he retains safely in his power. But to arouse a careless age, to sound the trumpet among the teachers of religion, to call on them to awake from spiritual torpor and then arouse their people -- this kindles all the wrath of the wicked one. But be not deterred. "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world."

Yes, beloved brethren, we must calculate on the bitterest hostility and the most subtle artifices of Satan as we proceed in our holy course. But be not deterred. "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world."

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

Chapter 29 **THE REFORMED PASTOR** **by Richard Baxter**

Many who have undertaken the work of the ministry, do so obstinately proceed in self-seeking, negligence, pride, and other sins, that it has become our necessary duty to admonish them. If we saw that such would reform without reproof, we would gladly forbear the publishing of their faults. But when reproofs themselves prove so ineffectual that they are more offended at the reproof than at the sin, and had rather that we should cease reproofing than that they should cease sinning, I think it is time to sharpen the remedy. For what else should we do? To give up our brethren as incurable were cruelty as long as there are further means to be used. We must not hate them, but plainly rebuke them, and not suffer sin upon them. To bear with the vices of the ministers is to promote the ruin of the church; for what speedier way is there for the depraving and undoing of the people, than the depravity of their guides? And how can we more effectually promote a reformation than by endeavoring to reform the leaders of the Church?

Believe it, brethren, God never saved any man for being a preacher, nor because he was an able preacher; but because he was a justified, sanctified man, and consequently faithful in his Master's work.

A graceless, inexperienced preacher is one of the most unhappy creatures upon earth; and yet he is ordinarily very insensible of his unhappiness; for he hath so many counterfeits that seem like the gold of saving grace, and so many splendid stones that resemble Christian jewels, that he is not troubled with the thoughts of his poverty, but thinks he is "rich and increased with goods; and hath need of nothing;" when he is "poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked."

Content not yourselves with being in a state of grace, but be careful that your graces are kept in vigorous and lively exercise, and that you preach to yourselves the sermons which you study, before you preach them to others. If you did this for your own sakes, it would not be lost labor. When your minds are in a holy, heavenly frame, your people are likely to partake of the fruits of it. Your prayers and praises and doctrine will be sweet and heavenly to them. They will likely feel when you have been much with God: that which is most on your hearts, is likely to be most in their ears. I confess I must speak it by lamentable experience, that I publish to my flock the distempers of my own soul. When I let my heart grow cold, my preaching is cold; and so I can often observe also in the best of my hearers, that when I have grown cold in preaching they have grown cold, too; and the next prayers which I have heard from them have been, too, like my preaching.

Oh, brethren, watch therefore over your own hearts: keep out lust and passions and worldly inclinations; keep up the life of faith and love and zeal; be much at home, much with God. If it be not your daily business to study your own hearts, and to subdue corruption and to walk with God -- if you make not this a work to which you constantly attend, all will go wrong, and you will starve

your hearers; or, if you have an affected fervency, you cannot expect a blessing to attend it from on high. Above all, be much in secret prayer and meditation. Thence you must fetch the heavenly fire that must kindle your sacrifices.

Vanity and error will slyly insinuate, and seldom come without fair pretenses: great distempers and apostasies have usually small beginnings. The prince of darkness doth frequently personate an angel of light, to draw the children of light again into darkness.

Take heed lest you unsay with your lives what you say with your tongues. He that means as he speaks, will surely do as he speaks. One proud, lordly word, one needless contention, one covetous action may cut the throat of many a sermon and blast the fruit of all that you have been doing.

I. A WISE AND SAFE INVESTMENT

Brethren, if the salvation of souls be your end, you will certainly intend it out of the pulpit as well as in it. If it be your end you will live for it and contribute all your endeavors to attain it. You will ask concerning the money in your purse as well as concerning other means, In what way shall I lay it out for the greatest good, especially to men's souls? Oh, that this were your daily study -- how to use your wealth, your friends and all you have for God, as well as your tongues. Let your lives condemn sin and persuade men to duty. If you would have others redeem their time, do not misspend yours. Be not proud and lordly if you would have others be lowly. A kind and winning carriage is a cheap way of doing men good. Let me entreat you to abound in works of charity and benevolence. Go to the poor and see what they want and show your compassion at once to their soul and body. Buy them a catechism or other small books that are most likely to do them good, and make them promise to read them with care and attention. Stretch your purse to the utmost and do all the good you can. Think not of being rich, seek not great things for yourselves or posterity. What if you do impoverish yourselves to do a greater good; will this be loss or gain? If you believe that God is the safest purse-bearer, and that to expend in His service is the greatest usury, show them that you do believe it.

That man who hath anything in the world so dear to him that he cannot spare it for Christ if He call for it is no true Christian. Oh, what abundance of good might ministers do if they would but live in contempt of the world and the riches and glory thereof; and expend all they have in their Master's service and pinch their flesh that they may have wherewith to do good. This would unlock more hearts to the reception of their doctrine than all their oratory; and without this, singularity in religion will seem like hypocrisy; and it is likely that it is so.

II. SATAN AIMS ESPECIALLY AT MINISTERS

Believe it, brethren, God is no respecter of persons; He saveth not men for their coats or callings. A holy calling will not save an unholy man. Take heed to yourselves because you are exposed to greater temptations than other men. If you will be the leaders against the prince of darkness, he will spare you no further than God restraineth him. He beareth the greatest malice to those that are engaged to do him the greatest mischief. He hath long tried that way of fighting neither against great nor small, comparatively, but of smiting the shepherds that he may scatter the flock; and so great

hath been his success this way that he will follow it as far as he is able. Take heed therefore, brethren, for the enemy hath a special eye upon you. The devil is a greater scholar than you; he will cheat you of your faith or innocence and you shall not know that you have lost it. Nay, he will make you believe it is multiplied or increased when it is lost. You shall see neither hook nor line, much less the subtler angler himself while he is offering you his bait. And his bait shall be so fitted to your temper and disposition that he will be sure to find advantages within you and make your own principles and inclinations betray you; and whenever he ruineth you he will make you the instrument of ruin to others. Oh, what a conquest will he think he hath got if he can make a minister lazy and unfaithful -- if he can tempt a minister into covetousness or scandal; he will glory against the church, and say, These are your holy preachers!

The eclipses of the sun by day are seldom without witnesses. As you take yourselves for the lights of the churches, you may expect that men's eyes will be upon you. If other men may sin without observation, so cannot you. A great man cannot commit a small sin. Oh, what a heinous thing it is in us to study how to disgrace sin to the utmost and make it as odious in the eyes of our people as we can, and when we have done it, to live in it and secretly cherish that which we publicly disgrace. What vile hypocrisy is it to make it our daily work to cry it down and yet to keep to it -- to call it publicly all naught and privately to make it our bed-fellow and companion -- to bind heavy burdens on others and not to touch them ourselves with a finger. What can you say to this in judgment? Why, if one of you that is a leader of the flock should be ensnared but once into some scandalous crime, there is scarcely a man or woman that seeketh diligently after their salvation within the bearing of it, but besides the grief of their hearts for your sin, are likely to have it cast in their teeth by the ungodly about them, however much they may detest and lament it. The ungodly husband will tell the wife and the ungodly parents will tell their children, and ungodly neighbors and fellow-servants will be telling one another of it, saying, These are your godly preachers! See what comes of all your stir; are you any better than others? You are even all alike. Such words as these must all the godly in the country bear for your sakes. "It must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom they come."

Never did man dishonor God, but it proved the greatest dishonor to himself. God will find out ways enough to wipe off any stain east upon Him; but you will not so easily remove the shame and sorrow from yourselves.

III. UNFAITHFUL SHEPHERDS

Can it be expected that God will bless that man's labors I mean comparatively as to other ministers -- who worketh not for God but for himself? Now this is the case with every unsanctified man. They choose it rather than another calling because their parents did destine them to it; or because it is a life wherein they have more opportunity to furnish their intellects with all kinds of science; and because it is not so toilsome to the body, to those that have a mind to favor their flesh; and because it is accompanied with some reverence and respect from men; and because they think it is a fine thing to be leaders and teachers, and have others "receive the law at their mouth." For such ends as these are they ministers and for these do they preach; and were it not for these or similar objects, they would soon give over. And can it be expected that God should bless the labors of such men? What though he live civilly and preach plausibly and maintain outwardly a profession of religion? He may

be as fast in the devil's snares by worldliness, pride, a secret distaste of diligent godliness, or by an unsound heart that is not rooted in the faith, nor unreservedly devoted to Christ as others are by drunkenness, uncleanness and similar disgraceful sins.

Publicans and harlots do sooner enter heaven than Pharisees, because they are sooner convinced of their sinfulness and misery. And though many of these men may seem excellent preachers and may cry down sin as loudly as others, yet it is all but an affected fervency and too commonly but a mere useless bawling; for he who cherishes sin in his own heart doth never fall upon it in good earnest in others.

If you are ungodly and teach not your families the fear of God, nor contradict the sins of the company you are in, nor turn the stream of their vain conversation, nor deal with them plainly about their salvation, they will take it as if you preached to them that such things are needless, and that they may boldly do so as well as you. You do worse than all this, for you teach them to think evil of others that are better than yourselves. How many a faithful minister and private Christian is hated and reproached for the sake of such as you! What say the people to them? You are so precise and tell us so much of sin and duty and make such a stir about these matters while such or such a minister that is as great a scholar as you and as good a preacher will be merry and jest with us and let us alone and never trouble himself or us. You can never be quiet, but make more ado than needs; and love to frighten men with talk of damnation when sober, learned, peaceful divines are quiet and live with us like other men. Such are the thoughts and talk of people which your negligence doth occasion. They will give you leave to preach against their sins and talk as much as you will for godliness in the pulpit if you will but let them alone afterward and be friendly and merry with them when you have done and talk as they do and live as they and be indifferent with them in your conversation.

Methinks as Paul's "spirit was stirred within him when he saw the Athenians wholly given to idolatry," so it should east us into one of his paroxysms to see so many men in the greatest danger of being everlastingly undone. Methinks if, by faith, we did, indeed, look upon them as within a step of hell, it would more effectually untie our tongues than Croesus' danger did his son's. He that will let a sinner go down to hell for want of speaking to him doth set less by souls than did the Redeemer of souls, and less by his neighbor than common charity will allow him to do by his greatest enemy.

How often do we hear sermons applauded which force us in compassion to men's souls to think, oh, what is all this to the opening of a sinner's heart unto himself and showing him his unregenerate state?

What is this to the conviction of a self-deluding soul that is passing into hell with the confident expectations of heaven?

What is this to show men their undone condition? What is in this to lead men up from earth to heaven and to acquaint them with the unseen world? How little skill have many miserable preachers in the searching of the heart, and helping men to know themselves whether Christ be in them, or whether they be reprobates. "They have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace."

What vile deceit and cruelty against the souls of men are such preachers guilty of that would make them believe that all is well with them, or that their state is safe or tolerable till they must find it otherwise to their everlasting woe. What shame, what punishment can be too great for such a wretch when the neglect and making light of Christ and His salvation is the common road to hell; and most men perish because they value not and use not the necessary means of their recovery. For a man in the name of a minister of the gospel to cheat them into such undervaluings and neglects as are likely to prove their condemnation -- what is this but to play the minister of Satan and to do his work in the name and garb of a minister of Christ? It is damnable treachery against Christ and against the people's souls to hide their misery when it is your office to reveal it: and to let people deceive themselves in the matter of salvation and not to labor diligently to undeceive them. A dreadful reckoning to these unfaithful shepherds when they must answer for the ruin of their miserable flocks. How great will their damnation be which must be aggravated by the damnation of so many others? Will it not awaken us to compassion to look on a languishing man and to think that within a few days his soul will be in heaven or in hell? Surely it will try the faith and seriousness of ministers to be much about dying men. They will thus have opportunity to discern whether they themselves are in good earnest about the matters of the life to come. Stay not till their strength and understanding are gone and the time so short that you scarcely know what to do; but go to them as soon as you hear they are sick whether they send for you or not.

IV. FAITHFUL SHEPHERDS

Self-denial is of absolute necessity in every Christian, but it is doubly necessary in a minister, as without it he cannot do God an hour's faithful service. Hard study, much knowledge and excellent preaching, if the ends be not right, is but more glorious hypocritical sinning. Ministerial work must be carried on with great humility. God, that thrust out a proud angel, will not entertain there a proud preacher. It is, indeed, pride that feedeth the rest of our sins. Hence the envy, the contention and unpeaceableness of ministers; hence the stops to all reformation: all would lead and few will follow or concur. Hence, also, is the non-proficiency of too many ministers, because they are too proud to learn. It is no small matter to stand up in the face of a congregation and to deliver a message of salvation or damnation as from the living God, in the name of the Redeemer. It is no easy matter to speak so plainly that the most ignorant may understand us; and so seriously that the deadest hearts may feel us; and so convincingly that the contradicting caviler may be silenced.

We must feel toward our people as a father toward his children; yea, the tenderest love of a mother must not surpass ours. We must even travail in birth till Christ be formed in them. They should see that we care for no outward thing, neither wealth, nor liberty, nor honor, nor life, in comparison of their salvation. I know not how it is with others, but the most reverent preacher that speaks as though he saw the face of God, doth more affect my heart, though with common words, than an irreverent man with the most exquisite preparations. Of all preaching in the world -- that speaks not stark lies -- I hate that preaching which tends to make the hearers laugh or to move their minds with tickling levity and affect them as stage plays used to do, instead of affecting them with a holy reverence of the name of God.

The more of God appeareth in our duties the more authority will they have with men. We should, as it were, suppose we saw the throne of God and the millions of glorious angels attending Him, that

we may be awed with His majesty when we draw near Him in holy things, lest we profane them and take His name in vain.

V. HEAVENLY CONCERN INSURES SUCCESS

If you would prosper in the ministerial work, be sure to keep up earnest desires and expectations of success. If your hearts be not set on the end of your labors and you long not to see the conversion and edification of your hearers and do not study and preach in hope you are not likely to see much success.

Prayer must carry on our work, as well as preaching; he preacheth not heartily to his people that prayeth not earnestly for them. If we prevail not with God to give them faith and repentance, we shall never prevail with them to repent.

To be a bishop or pastor, is not to be set up as an idol for the people to bow to; but it is to be the guide of sinners to heaven. Do these men consider what they have undertaken, that live in ease and pleasure, and have time to take their superfluous recreations, and to spend an hour and more at once in loitering or in vain discourse, when so much work doth lie upon their hands? If you will put forth your hand to relieve the distressed, He will wither the hand that is stretched out against you.

"Oh," saith one of the ancient doctors, "if Christ had but committed to my keeping one spoonful of His blood in a fragile glass, how curiously would I preserve it and how tender would I be of that glass! If then He has committed to me the purchase of His blood, should I not as carefully look to my charge?" You may say here, It is not a little crime that negligent pastors are guilty of. Oh, then, let us hear those arguments of Christ. Did I come down from heaven to earth "to seek and to save that which was lost," and wilt thou not go to the next door or street or village to seek them? How small is thy labor and condescension compared to mine. I debased myself to this, but it is thy honor to be so employed. Have I done and suffered so much for their salvation and was I willing to make thee a fellow-worker with me, and wilt thou refuse to do that little that lieth upon thy hands? Every time we look on our congregations, let us believingly remember that they are the purchase of Christ's blood. Oh, brethren, seeing Christ will bring His blood to plead with us, let it plead us to our duty lest it plead us to damnation.

VI. THE USE OF HUMILIATION

If God will help us in our future duty, He will first humble us for our past sin. He that hath not so much sense of his faults as unfeignedly to lament them, will hardly have so much as to move him to reform them. Indeed, we may here justly begin our confessions; it is too common with us to expect from our people that which we do nothing or little in ourselves. What pains do we take to humble them while we ourselves are unhumiliated. How hard do we expostulate with them to wring out of them a few penitential tears -- and all too little -- while yet our own eyes are dry.

One of the most heinous and palpable sins is PRIDE. It is so prevalent in some of us that it inditeth our discourses, it chooseth our company, it formeth our countenances, it putteth the accent and emphasis upon our words. It fills some men's minds with aspiring desires and designs; it

possesseth them with envious and bitter thoughts against those who stand in their light, or who by any means, eclipse their glory or hinder the progress of their reputation. Oh, what a constant companion, what a tyrannical commander is this sin of pride! How frequently doth it go with us to our study and there sit with us and do our work. How oft doth it choose our subject, and more frequently still, our words and Ornaments. God commandeth us to be as plain as we can that we may inform the ignorant; and as convincing and serious as we are able that we may melt and change their hardened hearts. But pride standeth by and contradicteth all and produces its toys and trifles. It persuadeth us to paint the window that it may dim the light; and to speak to our people that which they cannot understand to show them that we are able to speak unprofitably.

If we have a plain and cutting passage, it taketh off the edge and dulls the life of our preaching under pretense of filing off the roughness, unevenness and superfluity. When God chargeth us to deal with men as for their lives and to beseech them with all the earnestness that we are able, this cursed sin controlleth all and condemneth the most holy commands of God, and saith to us, What, will you make people think you are mad? Will you make them say you rage or rave? Cannot you speak soberly and moderately? And thus doth pride make many a man's sermon, and what pride makes, the devil makes. Though the matter be of God, yet if the dress and manner and e~ be from Satan, we have no great reason to expect success. And when pride hath made the sermon, it goes with us to the pulpit -- it formeth our tone -- it animateth us in the delivery -- it take, us off from that which may be displeasing, how necessary soever, and setteth us in pursuit of vain applause. In short, the sum of all this is, it maketh men, both in studying and preaching, to seek themselves and deny God, when they should seek God's glory and deny themselves. When they should inquire, What shall I say and how shall I say it to please God best and do most good? It makes them ask, What shall I say and how shall I deliver it to be thought a learned, able preacher and to be applauded by all that hear me? When the sermon is done, pride goeth home with them and maketh them more eager to know whether they were applauded, than whether they did prevail for the saving of souls. Were it not for shame they could find in their hearts to ask people how they liked them and to draw out their condemnations. If they perceive that they are highly thought of, they rejoice as having attained their end; but if they see that they are considered but weak or common men, they are displeased as having missed the prize they had in view.

VII. JEALOUSY A HEINOUS CRIME

Will any workman malign another because he helpeth him do his master's work? Yet, alas! How common is this heinous crime among the members of Christ. They can secretly blot the reputation of those that stand in the way of their own, and what they cannot for shame do in plain and open terms, lest they be proved liars and slanderers, they will do in generals and by malicious intimations, raising suspicions where they cannot fasten accusations. And some go so far that they are unwilling that anyone who is abler than themselves should come into their pulpits, lest they should be more applauded than themselves. A fearful thing it is, that any man who hath the least of the fear of God, should so envy God's gifts and had rather that his carnal hearers should remain unconverted and the drowsy unawakened than that it should be done by another who may be preferred before them.

But unless one of them be quite below the other in parts, and content to be so esteemed, or unless he be aft assistant to the other and ruled by him, they are contending for precedency and envying

each other's interest and walking with strangeness and jealousy towards one another, to the shame of their profession and the great injury of their people. Nay, so great is the pride of some men that when they might have an equal assistant to further the work of God, they had rather take all the burden upon themselves though more than they can bear, than that any one should share with them the honor or that their interest in the affections of the people should be diminished.

So high, indeed, are our spirits that when it becomes the duty of others to reprove or contradict us, we are commonly impatient, both of the matter and the manner. We love the man who will say as we say and be of our opinion and promote our reputation, though in other respects he be less worthy of our esteem. But he is ungrateful to us who contradicteth us and differeth from us and dealeth plainly with us as to our inconsistencies and telleth us of our faults. Where the eye of the world is upon us, we can scarce endure any contradiction or plain dealing. Our pride makes too many of us think all men contemn us that do not admire us; yea, and admire all we say. We are so tender that a man can scarcely touch us but we are hurt; and so high-minded that a man who is not versed in complimenting and skilled in flattery above the vulgar rate can scarcely tell how to handle us.

VIII. THE SUBTLETY OF PRIDE

When we speak of drunkards, worldlings or ignorant, unconverted persons, we disgrace them to the utmost and lay it on as plainly as we can speak, and tell them of their sin and shame and misery; and we expect that they should not only bear all patiently, but take all thankfully. Many gross sinners will commend the closest preachers most and will say that they care not for hearing a man that will not tell them plainly of their sins. But if we speak to a minister against his errors or his sins, if we do not honor them and reverence them and speak as smoothly as we are able to speak; yet if we mix not commendations with our reproofs, if the applause be not predominant so as to drown all the force of the reproof, they take it as almost an insufferable injury.

Is not pride the sin of devils -- the first-born of hell? Is it not that wherein Satan's image doth much consist, and is it to be tolerated in men who are so engaged against him and his kingdom as we are? The very design of the gospel is to abase us and the work of grace is begun and carried on in humiliation. How many of us are oftener found in the houses of gentlemen than in the cottages of the poor who most need our help. There are many of us who would think it below us to be daily with the most needy and beggarly people, instructing them in the way of life and salvation; as if we had taken charge of the souls of the rich only.

Alas, what is it that we have to be proud of? Is it of our body? And must it not shortly be loathsome in the grave? Is it of our graces? Why the more we are proud of them, the less we have to be proud of. Do not the devils know more than you? And will you be proud of that in which the devils excel you? Our very business is to teach the lesson of humility to our people. And how unfit is it that we should be proud ourselves? We must study humility and preach humility. And must we not possess and practice humility?

Pride, in fact, is no less a sin than drunkenness or fornication, and humility is as necessary as sobriety and chastity. Truly, brethren, a man may as certainly and more slyly make haste to hell in the way of earnest preaching of the gospel and seeming zeal for a holy life as in the way of

drunkenness and filthiness. For what is holiness but a living to God; and what is a damnable state but a living to ourselves? And doth anyone live more to himself or less to God than the proud man? And may not pride make a preacher pray and study and preach and live to himself even when he seems to surpass others in the work? The work may be God's and yet we may do it, not for God, but for ourselves. Consider, I beseech you, brethren, what baits there are in the work of the ministry even in the highest works of piety. The fame of a godly man is as great a snare as the fame of a learned man. But woe to him that takes up with the fame of godliness instead of godliness. Oh, what a fine thing it is to have the people crowding to hear us and affected with what we say, and yielding up to us their judgment and affections. What a noble thing it is to be famed through the land for the highest spiritual excellences. I commonly observe that almost all men, whether good or bad, do loathe the proud and love the humble. So far, indeed, doth pride contradict itself that, conscious of its own deformity, it often borrows the dress of humility. We have the more cause to be jealous of it because it is a sin most deeply rooted in our nature and as hardly as any extirpated from the soul.

It is only here and there, even among good ministers, that we find one who has an earnest, persuasive, powerful way of speaking, that the people can feel him preach when they hear him. A sermon full of mere words, how neatly soever it be composed, while it wants the light of evidence and life of zeal, is but the image of a well-dressed carcass.

IX. THE DANGER OF COVETOUSNESS

If any business for the church be on foot, how many ministers neglect it for their own private business. When we should meet and counsel together for the unanimous and successful prosecution of our work, one hath this business of his own, and another, that business, which must be preferred before God's business. How common is it for ministers to drown themselves in worldly business. They show no anxiety to throw off care, that their own souls and the church may have all their care. Money is too strong an argument for some men to answer, that can proclaim the love of it to be the root of all evil and can make long orations of the danger of covetousness. If it was so deadly a sin in Simon Magus to offer to buy the gift of God with money, what is it to sell His gifts, His cause, and the souls of men for money? Let us fear, lest our money perish with us. A man that preacheth an immortal crown should not seek after transitory vanities. And he that preacheth the contempt of riches should himself contemn them.

Those ministers, especially, that have larger incomes, must be larger in doing good. And now, brethren, I beseech you to take what has been said into consideration and see whether this be not the great and lamentable sin of the ministers of the gospel, that they give not up themselves and all that they have to the blessed work which they have undertaken; and whether flesh-pleasing and self-seeking and an interest distinct from that of Christ, do not make us neglect much of our duty and serve God in the cheapest and most applauded part of His work and withdraw from that which would subject us to cost and sufferings. And whether this does not show that too many of us are earthly that seem to be heavenly, and mind the things below while they preach the things above. and idolize the world while they call men to contemn it.

He is concluded by Christ to be no Christian who hateth not all that he hath and his own life for Him. What is it but hypocrisy to shrink from sufferings and take up none but safe and easy works

and make ourselves believe that the rest are no duties. Indeed, this is the common way of escaping suffering -- to neglect a duty that would expose us to it. If we did our duty faithfully, ministers would find the same lot among Christians as their predecessors have done among pagans and other infidels.

But if you cannot suffer for Christ, why do you put your hand to the plow? Why did you not first sit down and count the cost? This makes the ministerial work so unfaithfully executed because it is so carnally undertaken. Men enter upon it as a life of ease and honor and respectability. They look not for hatred and suffering and they will avoid it, though by the avoiding of their work.

X. THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL INSTRUCTION

If then, you are, indeed, fellow workers with Christ, set to His work and neglect not the souls for whom He died. Oh, remember when you are talking with the unconverted, that now you have an opportunity to save a soul and to rejoice the angels and to rejoice Christ, Himself, to cast Satan out of a sinner and to increase the family of God. And what is your hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not your saved people in the presence of Christ Jesus at His coming? Yea, doubtless, "they are your glory and your joy."

It is too common for men to think that the work of the ministry is nothing but to preach and to baptize and to administer the Lord's Supper, and to visit the sick. It hath often grieved my heart to observe some eminent preachers, how little they do for the saving of souls except in the pulpit. A schoolmaster must take a personal account of his scholars or else he is likely to do little good. If physicians should only read a public lecture on physic, their patients would not be much the better of them; nor would a lawyer secure your estate by reading a lecture on law. Now the charge of a pastor requires personal dealing as well as any of these. Let us show the world this by our practice; for most men are grown regardless of bare words.

If any among us should be guilty of so gross a mistake as to think that when he hath preached he hath done all his work, let us show him by our practice, that there is much more to be done; and that taking heed to all the flock is another business than careless, lazy ministers imagine.

What a happy thing would it be if you might live to see the day that it should be as ordinary for people of all ages to come in course to their ministers for personal advice and help for their salvation, as it is now usual for them to come to church to hear a sermon. Our diligence in this work is the way to accomplish this.

I know that preaching the gospel publicly is the most excellent means, because we speak to many at once; but it is usually far more effectual to preach it privately to a particular sinner; for the plainest man that is can scarcely speak plain enough in public for them to understand. But in private we may do it much more. In public we may not use such homely expressions or repetitions as their dullness requires; but in private, we may. Besides, we can better answer their objections and engage them by promises before we leave them, which in public we cannot do. I conclude, therefore, that public preaching will not be sufficient; for though it may be an effectual means to convert many, yet not so many as experience and God's appointment of further means may assure us. Long may you study and preach to little purpose if you neglect this duty. Doth not that threatening make us tremble, "If

thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand?" I am afraid, nay no doubt that the day is near, when unfaithful ministers will wish that they had never known their charge, but that they had rather been colliers or sweepers or tinkers than pastors of Christ's flock, when besides all the rest of their sins, they shall have the blood of so many souls to answer for. Oh, then for a clear conscience that can say, I lived not to myself, but to Christ; I spared not my pains; I hid not my talent; I concealed not men's misery nor the way of their recovery.

XI. THE FINAL REVIEW

I confess, to my shame, that I seldom hear the bell toll for one that is dead, but conscience asketh me, What hast thou done for the saving of that soul before it left the body? There is one more gone to judgment; what didst thou to prepare him for judgment? And yet I have been slothful and backward to help them that survive.

Our tutors that instructed us, the schools and universities where we lived, and all the years that we spent in study, will rise up in judgment against us and condemn us; for why was all this, but for the work of God?

Our learning and knowledge and ministerial gifts will condemn us; for to what end were we made partakers of these but for the work of God?

Our voluntary undertaking the charge of souls will condemn us; for all men should be faithful to the trust which they have undertaken.

All the care of God for His Church and all that Christ hath done and suffered for it will rise up in judgment against us if we be negligent and unfaithful, and condemn us because we neglected them for whom Christ died.

All the precepts and charges of holy Scripture, all the promises of assistance and reward, all the threatenings of punishment will rise up against us and condemn us, for God did not speak all this in vain. All the sermons that we preach to persuade our people to work out their salvation with fear and trembling -- to lay violent hands upon the crown of life and take the kingdom by force -- to strive to enter in at the straight gate and so to run as to obtain, will rise up against the unfaithful and condemn them.

All the sermons that we preach to set forth the joys of heaven and the torments of hell, yea, and the truth of the Christian religion, will rise up in judgment against the unfaithful and condemn them. And a sad review it will be to themselves when they shall be forced to think, "Did I tell them of such great dangers and hopes in public, and would I do no more in private to help? What, tell them daily of damnation, and yet let them run into it so easily? Tell them of such a glory, and scarcely speak a word to them personally to help them to it? Were these such great matters with me at church, and so small matters when I came home?" Ah, this will be dreadful self-condemnation.

All the judgments that God hath, in this age, executed on negligent ministers, before our eyes, will condemn us if we be unfaithful. Hath he made the idle shepherds and sensual drones to stink in the nostrils of the people; and will he honor us, if we be idle and sensual? Hath he sequestered them, and cast them out of their habitations, and out of their pulpits, and laid them by as dead while they are yet alive, and made them a hissing and a by-word in the land; and yet dare we imitate them? Are not their sufferings our warnings; and did not all this befall them as an example to us? If any thing in the world would awaken ministers to self-denial and diligence, methinks we had seen enough to do it.

Would you have imitated the old world if you had seen the flood that drowned it? Would you have indulged in the sins of Sodom, idleness, pride and fulness of bread, if you had stood by and seen the flames as they ascended up to heaven? Who would have been a Judas that had seen him hanged and burst asunder? And who would have been a lying, sacrilegious hypocrite, that had seen Ananias and Sapphira die? And who would not have been afraid to contradict the gospel that had seen Elymas smitten with blindness? And shall we prove idle, self-seeking ministers when we have seen God scourging such out of His temple and sweeping them away as dirt into the channels? God forbid. For then how great and how manifold will our condemnation be?

I profess I wonder at those ministers who have time to spare -- who can hunt, or shoot, or bowl, or use the like recreations two or three hours; yea, whole days together -that can sit an hour together in vain discourse, and spend whole days in complimentary visits, and journeys to such ends. Good Lord, what do these men think on when so many souls around them cry for help, and death gives us no respite and they know not how short a time they and their people may be together; when the smallest parish has so much work that may employ all their diligence night and day?

Brethren, I hope you are willing to be plainly dealt with. If you have no sense of the worth of souls and of the preciousness of that blood which was shed for them and of the glory to which they are going and of the misery of which they are in danger, you are not Christians and consequently are very unfit to be ministers. And if you have, how can you find time for needless recreations, visits or discourses? Dare you, like idle gossips, trifle away time when you have such works as these to do and so many of them. Oh, precious time -- how swiftly doth it pass away -- how soon will it be gone! Never do I come to a dying man that is not utterly stupid but he better sees the worth of time. Oh, then, if they could call time back again, how loudly would they call. If they could but buy it, what would they not give for it? And yet we can afford to trifle it away? Is it possible that a man of any compassion and honesty or any concern about his ministerial duty or any sense of the strictness of his account, should have time to spare for idleness or vanity?

He who knoweth that he serveth a God that will never suffer a man to be a loser by him, need not fear what hazards he runs in his cause; and he who knows that he seeks a prize which, if obtained, will infinitely overbalance his cost, may boldly engage his whole estate on it and sell all to purchase so rich a pearl.

What have we our time and strength for, but to lay them out for God? What is a candle made for, but to burn? Burned and wasted we must be, and is it not fitter it should be in lighting men to heaven, and in working for God, than in living to the flesh? How little difference is there between

the pleasure of a long and a short life when they are both at an end? What comfort will it be to you at death that you lengthened your life by shortening your work? He that works much, liveth much. Our life is to be esteemed according to the ends and works of it, and not according to the mere duration. Will it not comfort us more at death, to review a short time faithfully spent, than a long life spent unfaithfully?

And I must tell you further, brethren, that if another might take some time for mere delight which is not necessary, yet so cannot you; for your undertaking binds you to stricter attendance than other men are bound to. Suppose a city were besieged, and the enemy watching, on one side, all advantages to surprise it, and on the other seeking to fire it with granadoes, which they are throwing in continually, I pray you tell me, if some men undertake, as their office, to watch the ports, and others to quench the fire that may be kindled in the houses, what time will you allow these men for recreation or relaxation, when the city is in danger, and the fire will burn on and prevail, if they intermit their diligence? Or will you excuse one of these men if he comes off his work and says, I am but flesh and blood, I must have some relaxation and pleasure? Surely, at the most you will allow him none but what was absolutely necessary.

If you would prepare for a comfortable death and a great and glorious reward, the harvest is before you. Gird up the loins of your minds and quit yourselves like men that you may end your days with these triumphant words: "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 of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give unto me in that day." If you would be blest with those that die in the Lord, labor now, that you may rest from your labors then, and do such works as you wish should follow you and not such as will prove your terror in the review.

BOLDNESS IN THE GOSPEL

Shall I, for fear of feeble men,
The Spirit's course in me restrain?
Or undismayed in deed or word,
Be a true witness of my Lord?

Awed by a mortal's frown, shall I,
Conceal the word of God Most High?
How then before Thee shall I dare
To stand, or how Thine anger bear?

Shall I, to soothe the unholy throng,
Softener Thy truth, or smoother my tongue,
To gain earth's gilded toys, or flee
The cross endured, my Lord, by Thee?

What then is he whose scorn I dread?
Whose wrath or hate makes me afraid?
A man! an heir of death! a slave
To sin! a bubble on the wave!

Yea, let men rage; since Thou wilt spread
Thy shadowing wings around my head;
Since in all pain Thy tender love
Will still my sure refreshment prove.

Give me Thy strength, O God of power,
Then let winds blow, or thunders roar,
Thy faithful witness will I be;
'Tis fixed I can do all through Thee.

J. J. Winkler, Tr. by J. Wesley.

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

Chapter 30 **THE PREPARATION OF SERMONS** **by John Paul**

Every true sermon is an organization or an organism of thought. Speaking from the human standpoint, sermons Originate in two ways. They are made and they grow.

When the theme is selected for the coming Sunday sermon it will help the preacher's grasp of the subject for him to think much about it on his own account, sometimes going to sleep with the meditation in his heart. If it is a practical theme that affects conditions in the slums or factories or stores or law offices or hospitals or among the poor, the preacher should go personally and review the illustrations of his subject and talk on his subject with various people representing it.

There are some themes in which this does not apply. Perhaps he is going to preach on home religion, on faith, on prayer, on one of our Lord's miracles or parables. If he is a young preacher he can well afford to converse with a few older students on this subject or passage. The effect will be not only to improve his understanding of it but to work it into his system, so to speak, and foster a special enthusiasm that will add to the spirit and quality of his message.

We recognize that preachers need exhortation to pray more, to live better, to pay their debts, to use discretion, to avoid fanaticism, and a thousand other things. But one of the outstanding needs is for the preacher to preach better. It is easy for a man to let down and think he is preaching well enough, even though he knows he is not doing his absolute best. Inferior preaching hurts the world's respect for the gospel. Superior preaching stops the mouths of gainsayers and arrests the attention of a thinking world. Almost any minister with common sense and reasonable talent can make a strong preacher if he refuses to content himself with inferior preaching and makes it a matter of conscience to do his best.

We need not speak at length about the second class of sermon preparation, where we grow them. A great many evangelists who began young in their ministry and tarried only a short while in each place will recall that their best sermons have been a growth. Where our situation favors this method we can get a thought from a book or from some other man's sermon or it can come to us in the hour of prayer and meditation, and this thought may have about it the qualities of a germ. We talk it over with a friend and thus we get practice. We give it in a prayer meeting lecture and the field of thought grows larger. We preach it on a rainy night at the revival. Gradually it enlarges until finally as a thing of life it becomes an outstanding gospel message. Sermons developed this way are more likely to be organisms, although it is possible to draft an outline and build a sermon under the pastoral method suggested above and have its parts so fused together by spiritual fire and make it such a thing of life that it will be an organism.

In it all the Holy Spirit must be invited. On top of these methods the baptism of the Spirit is the indispensable climax of preparation.

HEART-SEARCHING TALKS TO MINISTERS

Compiled by
E. E. Shelhamer

Chapter 31 **A MINISTRY FOR THE LAST TIMES** **(1 Timothy 4:1-8)** **by Joseph H. Smith**

Two things are to be noted at the outset about the Times. (1) This whole dispensation, as scripturally viewed, is the "latter times". (2) There are pre-announcements made of this age by the Holy Spirit.

Here Paul, in the study before us, is advising his son Timothy of his duty with regard to certain hypocrisies and fanaticisms which would be manifest in the latter times -- all of which appeared as early as Paul's and Timothy's day. And instead of their being peculiar to these seeming closing hours of the day, they have marked the whole dispensation of the Holy Ghost. God is now doing His best and Satan his worst for the human race.

The many false prophets and false christs, with the various antichrists of our times, are direct proof that we are in the very same times of the apostles and the early Christian church, that these things instead of abating are to "increase and abound yet more and more;" and that the ministry enjoined to Timothy is applicable to us.

We will notice, first, three marks of the combat; and second, three features of a good minister for such times. The three marks noted by the apostle Paul are: Apostasy, Hypocrisy and Fanaticism.

(1) "Some shall depart from the faith." Ringleaders in "modernism", "atheism" and in opposition to Holiness and to evangelism were once ardent heralds and witnesses of the Truth as it is in Jesus. Their compromises under "pretense of progress" have been the hoisting of flags of truce, to gain a Balaam's reward or an ecclesiastical office, or a scholar's degree. Judas is not an exception; he is an example of the traitorous spirit that appears in all the developments of these latter days.

(2) "Speaking lies in hypocrisy." Their public punctiliousness is but a whitened sepulcher to their inward rottenness. Their claim to and seeming manifestations of superior gifts of the Spirit are but covert to avarice, self-indulgence, and lewdness of the flesh.

(3) Fanaticism of various sorts, as of "old wives' fables." Satan knows how to utilize the lure of womanhood into the promulgation of error, under her fascinations and persuasions. Their artful proficiency in dealing with men, as acquired by their one, two, or three divorces which entitle them to the designation of "old wives", is enlisting in many of the movements that are claiming to offer something better than the "faith of the fathers". And woman's queendom of the home has been sacrificed for her dictation and domination in cults of religion.

All such "departures from the faith" are here attributed to: "doctrines of devils" (v.1.) Not only so in that some of them do actually further the worship of devils, but more, emanate from devils. They are not simply the convictions of evil men's intellects: but as above holy men's best thinking the Holy Spirit has by inspiration given us the Truth, so beneath depraved men's deepest devisings, devils have imbued their thoughts and animated their speech with damning error. As in Moses' day the devil's magicians in Egypt could well-nigh duplicated the signs and miracles of God's prophets, so in these latter days the "gifts" and unction of the Holy Ghost can well-nigh be duplicated by Satan's emissaries of error. Through this age we are admonished to recognize that the devil runs a counterfeit mill to offset, wherever he may, the currency of the Holy Ghost.

Now, three things are here stated as to a Good Minister. One is that he will not let his courtesy for the divorcees or other society women that are propagators of some such movements, rob him of his courage to "refuse" their profane "fables." Tolerance may become a vice, when it opens the mind, or opens the home, or opens the door of the church to error. (See 2 John 10, 11.)

Again, we note the good minister does not hold his tongue about these errors. "He puts the brethren in remembrance of these things" and nourishes them in words of faith and of good doctrine. He may have to sometimes preach controversially as well as affirmatively. And perhaps in some instances, as where such gross heresies as that "the resurrection is past already" (or what is equivalent thereto, that Christ has already come) he may like Paul (the master builder) speak by name, the "Hymenaeus and Philetus" whom the enemy may be using there to overthrow the faith of some.

And lastly, he exercises himself unto godliness. For as he knows the athlete can no more gain strength and dexterity, or the musician skill and proficiency, without rigorous discipline and much practice and exercise, no more can the minister acquire success in intercession with God or persuasion of men without much and rigorous exercise unto godliness.