

Volume XII

JULY

Number 3

*Bulletin*

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

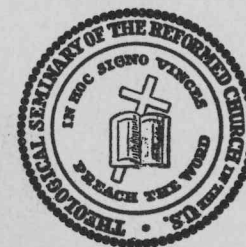
OF THE

REFORMED CHURCH IN THE

UNITED STATES

EVANGELICAL AND REFORMED CHURCH

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LANCASTER, PENNSYLVANIA

1941

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Published four times a year, January, April, July, October, by the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church in the U. S.

President Theodore F. Herman, Managing Editor; Professor David Dunn, Business Manager.

Entered at the postoffice in Lancaster, Pa., as second-class matter.

## BULLETIN

# Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church in the United States

VOLUME XII

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## SEMINARY NEWS ITEMS

As one looks back over the second semester at the Seminary, he has a general impression of fleeting days—all too few in number—crowded full of good things.

The Swander and McCauley Lectures, which were delivered February 3–5, have already been reported upon in *The Messenger*. Prof. Paul J. Tillich, brilliant member of the faculty of Union Theological Seminary and now a minister of our own denomination, spoke on “New Ways in Systematic Theology.” Equally evident in his presentation were the sincerity of his spirit and the depth of his scholarship, and both were greatly appreciated. Dr. Gerhard W. Grauer, pastor of a former “E” church in Cincinnati, Ohio, was our McCauley lecturer. It was a pleasure to welcome him and to hear his treatment of the subject, “Ancient Truths in Modern Terms.”

On February 20, Dr. E. M. Conover of the Interdenominational Bureau of Architecture was a visitor to the Seminary. He gave several illustrated lectures on noteworthy edifices throughout the world, as well as the type of construction which is demanded by church programs of the present day.

Ash Wednesday, February 26, was the date set for our annual Missionary Conference. This was the year for a presentation of the work of the Board of International Missions. We were fortunate in being able to have with us, through the good offices of Dr. A. V. Casselman, a number of missionaries fresh from their work in China and Japan. They brought us an inspiring chronicle of sacrificial endeavor in the face of conditions both difficult and dangerous. Miss Gertrude B. Hoy and Rev. J. Frank Bucher spoke on our educational work in China. Rev. Sterling W. Whitener described our evangelistic and medical work in the

same country. Rev. George S. Noss gave a report on the missionary situation in Japan. Dr. Paul L. Gerhard preached at our first Lenten service, which fell of course on that day. In the evening Dr. Casselman painted a picture of the missionary scene in eastern Asia—dark as night in many places and yet illumined by rays of Christian hope.

Following its usual custom, the Seminary fellowship held weekly services throughout the Lenten period. The members of the faculty served as preachers at these afternoon periods of meditation and worship. During this same period the Evangelical and Reformed ministers of Lancaster and vicinity joined with the Seminary in one of our morning chapel services. Rev. L. C. T. Miller of Elizabethtown, Pa. conducted the service, and President Herman delivered the devotional address.

An additional Lenten observance consisted in the contribution of a sum of more than seventy dollars to the War Emergency Relief Fund of the denomination. Besides this, the students on their own initiative sponsored an offering for the relief of students throughout the world.

The Seminary Choir, under the leadership of Dr. Sykes, delivered a series of sacred concerts throughout the state of Pennsylvania. The places visited this year included Boyertown, Maytown, Ephrata, York, Greensburg, Altoona, and Huntingdon.

On the day appointed for a student demonstration throughout the nation on behalf of world peace, our own institution decided that its observance would take the form of a service of worship in Santee Hall. Professor Frantz was the speaker on this occasion.

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The exercises of the One Hundred and Sixteenth Anniversary of the Seminary were opened with the Baccalaureate Service on Sunday, May 4. Professor DeLong was the preacher this year. His text was the phrase, "You only have I known," from Amos 3:2, and also Malachi 2:6 which reads: "The law of truth was in his mouth, and unrighteousness was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and uprightness, and turned many away from iniquity." From this point of departure in the Old Testa-

ment which he knows and loves so well, he proceeded to deliver a long-to-be-remembered sermon on the privileges and the duties of the Christian ministry.

This service marked the public use for the first time of a system of flood-lights upon the altar in Santee Hall. The lights are the gift of this year's graduating class in memory of their class-mate, William David Schnebly, who died December 11, 1939. They serve to bring out fully the beauty of the altar and reredos, and thus add materially to the impressiveness of our chapel.

On the afternoon of Baccalaureate Sunday the Seminary Choir gave its last rendition of its program of sacred music for this year. A large audience was present for this event.

On Monday evening President and Mrs. Herman tendered their usual reception to the members of the Senior Class and their friends. Anniversary Week can not and should not be all sermons and addresses. These times of delightful fellowship have their own distinctive role to play.

The Anniversary Preacher of this year, Dr. Joseph Fort Newton, was greeted on Tuesday evening by an attendance which overflowed both the chapel and the adjoining class-room. Perhaps many were thinking of the fact that the City Temple in London which Dr. Newton served for a period has been recently demolished by bombs. His text was from Isaiah 21:11-12: "Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night." The sermon which followed was an exposition and evaluation of various philosophies of history—the "squirrel-cage" theory, the "pull-and-tug" theory, the "toboggan" theory, the "escalator" theory, the "bread-and-butter" theory, and the "advent" theory. The closing note was an enunciation of yet another theory which comes down to us in the Hebrew-Christian tradition—namely, that history is His story as well as ours.

Commencement Day, Wednesday, saw first the annual meeting of the Historical Society. The subject this year was "Zinzendorf and the Reformed Church," and the speaker was Rev. John Joseph Stoudt.

At the meeting of the Alumni Association which followed, Rev. Howard Obold of the forty-year class was elected president for

the ensuing year. Rev. Victor H. Jones was elected vice-president. Rev. James E. Wagner and Professor O. S. Frantz were returned to their offices of secretary and treasurer respectively.

The Commencement exercises proper belong traditionally to the graduates themselves. Five members of the graduating class are chosen each year by the faculty to read essays representing the several departments of seminary work. The five men thus designated this year were: Stuart C. Snodgrass, Donald W. Schlicher, Paul E. Strauch, Dean R. Feather, and Albert C. Robinson. Testimonials were then awarded by Dr. Hendricks, president of the Board of Visitors, to the following graduates in addition to those already named: Arthur E. Antal, Woodrow W. Kern, Charles O. Leibig, Lawrence A. Leonard, Elmer G. Link, John S. Royer, Walter E. Cathers, Jr., and Warren L. Hackman.

Considerable interest invariably attaches to the annual award of prizes. The Schaff Prize in Church History is given to the member of the Senior Class writing the best essay on an assigned historical subject. The winner of this prize was Mr. Paul E. Strauch. The Prize in Sacred Rhetoric is given to the member of the Middle Class submitting the best sermon. Mr. Elden E. Ehrhart received this prize. The Jacob Y. Dietz Prize is open to members of the Middle Class who write essays on a designated topic, the field of which rotates from year to year among the departments of the Seminary. The first award of this prize went to Mr. Elden E. Ehrhart, and the second award to Mr. Karl R. Flocken.

Rev. Howard Obold, newly elected president of the Alumni Association, presided at the Alumni Luncheon which is the closing event of Anniversary Week. After being introduced by President Herman, he in turn presented Dr. Edward O. Keen of the Class of 1896, Rev. Francis M. Line of the Class of 1891, and Mr. Donald W. Schlicher of the Class of 1941. Thus, with reminiscences of the past century and hope for the present, another year of preparing men for the Christian ministry came to a close.

We were saddened by the death of Mr. L. B. Stoudnour of Roaring Spring, Pa., a member of the Board of Trustees of the Seminary. The news reached us on Commencement Day.

The outgoing president of the Society of Inquiry supplies the following account of activities during the second semester:

"A rather heavy academic schedule and a group of choir trips made for infrequent meetings of the Society of Inquiry during the second semester. Early in the semester Mr. Armstrong presented a program of Boy Scout activities for the local church. He distributed mimeographed material on the Scout program. His talk provoked many interesting questions. Rev. James E. Wagner read his paper on 'The High Costs and Low Morals of Funerals' at another meeting. His paper raised the question of accepting fees for pastoral services, which called forth much discussion.

A spring picnic was held at Long's Park again. Soft ball and duggies were the order of the day.

The officers for next semester were recently elected. They are: Edwin Staudt, President; Herbert Rice, Vice-president. The Secretary-Treasurer, Robert Dilliard, continues in office. Mr. Staudt made an interesting inaugural talk in which he proposed to make the new students feel at home next year."

\* \* \* \*

It is a real satisfaction to be able to report that all of the members of this year's graduating class are located in pastorates. Mr. Antal is at Whiting, Ind.; Mr. Feather is at Blain, Pa.; Mr. Leibig to the best of our knowledge is continuing to serve the church in Philadelphia which he supplied while a student; Mr. Leonard is at Landis, N. C.; Mr. Link is at Richlandtown, Pa.; Mr. Robinson is pastor of Faith Church, York, Pa.; Mr. Royer is at Lemasters, Pa.; Mr. Schlicher is at Osterburg, Pa.; Mr. Snodgrass is at Boonsboro, Md.; and Mr. Strauch is at Freemansburg, Pa. Messrs. Cathers, Hackman, and Kern have for some years been serving pastorates in the Methodist Church.

—N. C. H.



## THE TASK OF THE CITY PASTOR IN OUR TIME

PAUL M. SCHROEDER

The topic: "The Task of a City Pastor in Our Time" suggests that there are certain variables in the task of the ministry. The city doubtless will always present problems and opportunities that are peculiar to the city as such. It is hardly necessary to remind you that the task of the city pastor differs in many respects from the task of the village or rural pastor. Although the Christian church first took root in the life of the cities of the old Roman Empire and only slowly penetrated to the rural sections, so that the term "pagan" ("pagani") originally meant rural folk, it is also true that the cities have tended more powerfully than the rural environment to secularize and corrupt the church. It is well to remember that the villages of Galilee responded enthusiastically to the good news of Jesus of Nazareth but the city rejected him and nailed him to the cross. When Jesus wept over Jerusalem he wept not only over a holy place which contained His Father's House, He wept over a city that was too cynical, corrupt and proud to accept him as the Messiah, the Promised One of God.

The second variable in our task is time. Our time is different. Although history may repeat itself and move in recurring cycles, yet each generation has its own distinguishing and characterizing phenomena. Each decade in our own lifetime has its descriptive appellation as e.g. "the Gay Nineties," "the Dry Decade." Life today differs profoundly from the life of our fathers and grandfathers. To analyze these differences would take us too far afield for the limits of this paper. A little reflection is sufficient to make us aware of the changes that have come to pass in our own generation. It will suffice to comment on these changes as we analyze the task which has been committed to our hands as pastors of the Church of Christ.

What of the task? Surely the task must be constant at least in terms of principle and objectives. Our task is not primarily preaching, teaching, administration, pastoral care and community service. These may or may not be methods of approaching our task which may or may not change with the passing years.

Fundamentally our task is to witness for Christ. "Ye shall be my witnesses" remains the primary and unchanging task of the minister of Christ. Our witness may or may not be successful, judged by human standards of success. That is not our concern. If our witness is faithful and in accordance with the spirit of Christ and the word of God, we may leave the results to Him "whose we are and whom we serve."

We used to speak glibly and optimistically of building the Kingdom of God as the goal of our ministry in the church. I hope it is no mere quibbling to say that this is God's responsibility, not ours. It is still true that "Paul sows and Apollos waters, but it is God that giveth the increase." We used to ring the changes on the phrase: "We are workers together with God." Our relationship to God was interpreted as a kind of partnership in which God was the silent if not the absentee partner, leaving to our human effort the chief responsibility for the achievement of the goal. It is true that we are fellow-workers with Him but in no sense as equals, but as servants, bond servants, who having done all within our power must humbly confess, "We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do." (Luke 17: 10)

The task of the minister is realized in and through the church. The church constitutes his field and his force. It is impossible to discuss the nature and the function of the church within the limits of this paper. For our purposes we shall consider the church primarily as a group of professing Christians organized into a congregation for the purpose of bearing witness to the will of God revealed in Jesus Christ. The task of the city pastor in our time must be studied therefore in reference to this definite relationship of pastor and congregation.

The size of the congregation is a definitely conditioning factor for the effectiveness of the pastor's service in the church. In my humble opinion a congregation may be too large for effective service in the care and nurture of souls. The day is past when large congregations can be held together by great preaching. It requires personal contact and personal case work to achieve growth in Christian personality. I feel we are on solid ground here. If Jesus avoided and discounted the multitude, in order

that he might give himself to the intense personal training of the twelve, we may well resist the temptation to win the multitude in our concern for the individual.

It is useless to argue that the Protestant church should increase its staff. This the Church Council or Consistory is generally unwilling to do. Furthermore Protestant pastors serving in the same church are not subject to the strict discipline of an authoritarian system as in Catholic churches, and therefore require an unusual amount of tact and Christian grace to labor together in full harmony and cooperation.

The most satisfactory membership limit for a Protestant church appears to be about 500-750 members. This is not too large for one pastor to serve and yet large enough to insure a fair standard of living for the minister and a small staff of part-time or full-time lay workers. If you should ask why large churches do not divide into several congregations or at any rate endeavor to cut down their membership you encounter the difficulty of maintaining a large building that has been provided to take care of the large membership. We are thus caught in a vicious cycle from which there seems to be no escape.

Let us now consider some of the most important functions in the city minister's task:

#### I. THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE AND INDIVIDUAL WORSHIP

The *worship service* is doubtless central in the program of the church. One of the outstanding trends in our time is the increasing emphasis on worship. Not only must the worship be carefully planned to conform to the best traditions of the ecumenical church, it must also be held strictly within the limits of the time allotted for it. The radio, as well as modern working conditions, have made us clock-conscious. People today arrange their social as well as business engagements by the clock. To end on time is just as important as to begin on time. Services that extend beyond the usual time, except for some good and sufficient reason that commends itself to the entire congregation, tend to arouse an almost unconscious impatience and resentment that may cancel out the spiritual uplift that should come to the heart of the worshipper in the act of worship. People tend to shun the church that does not begin and end on time.

The day of great preaching may be past but the need of good preaching is greater than ever. The sermon must not be too long. I try to condense what I have to say to not more than twenty minutes. It is probably legitimate for a guest preacher to speak longer than the usually allotted time if the occasion demands it. The special speaker brings a new voice and a new personality into the pulpit which tends to hold the attention for a longer period. But in the course of years the congregation has become thoroughly accustomed to the voice, the gestures and the mannerisms of its pastor. It will not longer be interested in the appearance and the personality of the preacher but in what he has to say. Moreover, the city dweller is notoriously movie-minded. He is picture-conscious. He is incapable of sustained attention to abstract argument. Mental images, word pictures are more effective than the most inspired eloquence or the most profound logic.

In my choice of sermon topics I have recently undergone a conversion. In former years I have spent much precious time mulling over the question from week to week: "What shall I preach?" Sometimes I would work out a series but when that was completed I was again face to face with this besetting problem that at times approached the proportion of a nightmare. I tried to fit my sermon to the needs and interests of the congregation. I sometimes found a "starter" for my next Sunday's sermon in some current book I was reading at the moment. Even the newspapers were scanned to find a suggestion for a sermon. Too often my resources for the preaching of the Eternal Word proved to be nothing more than "broken cisterns that can hold no water."

Several years ago it was my privilege to hear Doctor Dauerty deliver a paper at the Western Section of the World Alliance on "The Reformed Ideal of Worship." One sentence in that scholarly presentation sank deeply into my memory. "The sermon does not determine the scripture—the scripture determines the sermon." Henceforth I try to follow the prescribed pericope for the day and let the Word of God tell me what to preach. I am only partially successful in this plan because I still permit myself to be swayed by the numerous special

days that have become a tradition in my church which call for special sermons. But the plan has helped me to turn to God's Word rather than to current events, casual magazine articles, or homiletical crutches for the burden of my message.

The problem of maintaining and increasing church attendance must be resolutely faced by every city pastor. We are rapidly approaching the continental type of sabbath observance in our own country, which for generations has been governed both by law and tradition according to the Puritan ideals. In our community, Sunday night services have practically disappeared. The lure of the lakes and the mountains and the convenience of the family car result in ever increasing mass movements away from the church in the summer. Now the Catholic services do not appear to suffer in the matter of attendance in the same proportion as the Protestant services for two reasons. Catholics are thoroughly trained in church attendance. Moreover they can worship in any Catholic church with equal satisfaction and spiritual renewal, in the large cathedral or in the little mission in the mountains. In our Protestant tradition church attendance has lost its importance to the individual because of our emphasis on ethical values in Christian living. We have said so insistently that church attendance is not per se a distinguishing mark of a Christian life that most Protestants have relegated this practice to the domain of individual preference rather than that of solemn obligation. Moreover, many Protestants who are faithful to their church worship at home feel absolutely no inner compulsion to attend church when on vacation or away from home. Again many Protestants consider Sunday School attendance a satisfactory equivalent for church attendance and never make a successful transition from Sunday School attendance to church attendance.

Our emphasis upon the sermon as not only the central but also the indispensable feature of church worship has militated against faithful church attendance. If the minister's sermons do not suit the sermon tasters, it is just too bad for the minister and for the church. The dissatisfied church member is henceforth conspicuous for his absence. The trend to the enrichment of worship is doubtless a corrective of this exaggerated emphasis

on the sermon and tends to transform the Protestant worshipper from an attitude of passivity to that of active participation in the act of worship.

As Protestant pastors we may take another leaf from the notebook of Roman Catholic experience. The Catholic worshipper in the humblest church can find the church open and a service of worship prepared for him almost any hour from five to eleven o'clock on Sunday morning. The Protestant is not so fortunate. He must go to church at eleven o'clock or he is "out of luck" for the day. Many Protestant churches, including my own, have added an early worship service to their regular schedule, some for the summer only, some for the entire year. Our own early service which to date is limited to July and August of each year increased our church attendance over 50% during the summer season. Personally I feel that this service should be continued throughout the year.

A great source of spiritual power that has largely disappeared from our Protestant churches is the "Family Altar." The hectic tempo of our daily life is doubtless responsible to a large degree for this disappearance. The deep and abiding influence of family prayers and Bible reading can without doubt be confirmed in the personal experience of all of us present here today.

Our reaction to this decline in family or private worship dare not be surrender, but renewed and redoubled effort. The phenomenal sale of such booklets as "The Upper Room" (published by the Southern Methodist Church), which has grown in less than five years to a circulation of more than a million copies each quarter, is an encouraging sign of a widespread response to a method of providing devotional material adapted to the present situation. The building of the Family Altar in the lives and homes of our people must be a task of vital significance for our time.

## II. THE PASTOR AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Informed students of the religious education scene today tell us we are approaching a crisis in religious education. Not only has there been a steady decline in Sunday School attendance in the past ten years but what is more serious is the deterioration of the standards of the educational program in the local church.



Many pastors regard the net results of the Sunday School in terms of Christian character training to be practically worthless. Some pastors have abolished the Sunday School altogether.

It is here that the pastor faces his most difficult and desperate problem. Unless our religious education can be religious in the truest sense of the word we are done for. We face an appalling situation. The secularization of all education is almost complete. In our attempt to separate church and state, the Protestant church has abjectly surrendered all claims, not only for the teaching of religion in the public schools, but, what is infinitely worse, for the maintenance of the Christian philosophy of life as the framework and background of education. Our Catholic critics are probably justified in referring to the public schools as "godless" institutions. They are godless, not because of the absence or presence of godless teachers, or godless textbooks, but because of the frankly materialistic and secularistic postulates that underlie the educational system. The Sunday School movement has been infiltrated with the same disintegrating forces that have corrupted secular education. In our feverish concern to make religious education pedagogically and psychologically acceptable, we have moved from a Bible-centered program to a pupil-centered program to a life situation program. To our dismay our religious education program grew steadily less effectual. The Director of Religious Education of Rhode Island recently confessed: "The Sunday School has gone out with the kerosene lamp." Writing in "America" in 1937, John LaFarge states: "The Sunday School is little more than a ghost."

Frankly I do not know what the answer is but I know that the answer must be found. Our Church School objectives and program need a complete overhauling. The adult department must be reorganized to conform to genuine educational aims and objectives. It should not be permitted to compete with the regular church worship. The large adult class is in many cases a church within a church and the Bible Class lesson is generally a thinly disguised sermon.

We must forget our mania for counting noses. Breaking attendance records may fill us with spiritual pride but not with the Holy Spirit. A limited number of pupils who are present

for the definite purpose of learning about God and His Word is infinitely more to be desired than a large aggregation of people who are present to win a contest or to have their emotions played upon by some entertaining and wise-cracking teacher.

We need a new center for our religious program. I propose that we develop a God-centered program of religious education . . . and the God who must be at the center can not be a hypothesis, or a formula or an idea. He must be the God of authority who gives meaning to life, who has revealed himself in His word, who demands obedience to His will, who saves from sin, who gives assurance of eternal life, unto whom we must give account in the day of judgment.

I propose henceforth to make God the center; the knowledge of, the loyalty to the Word of God, the fundamental prerequisites of every teacher, the obedience to God's will the end result of every lesson. I shall discard much of the useless memory work in the confirmation class and devote myself to making the Bible a real book of authority, the infallible guide for faith and life to every boy and girl. Religious education must begin with God and lead to God. Nothing less than this is worthy of the name.

### III. THE SHEPHERD OF THE FLOCK

I confess to a preference for the title Pastor when I am addressed by a member of my congregation because the minister is preeminently the shepherd of the flock. It is in this field that the inadequacy of pastoral supervision becomes apparent in the ministry to large congregations. When the pastor can call every man, woman and child in his congregation by their first, as well as their last name, he has entered into the true succession of the Great Shepherd, "who calleth his own by name." Pastoral care is personal to the nth degree. I have heard young preachers sneer at "doorbell pushers" but I have found no technique to equal pastoral calling in maintaining contact with the people and developing their loyalty to Christ and the Church. It was an English divine of the 19th century who coined the phrase—"A home-going pastor makes a church-going congregation."

Pastoral visitation concerns itself with three general objectives:



(1) visitation of the sick, (2) acquaintance calls and (3) personality problems. I have a list of sick and shut-in members on a card index system divided into two groups, the seriously ill and the chronic shut-ins. The first group is classified according to hospitals and districts. We have divided our parish into four districts and endeavor to cover one district at a time, in order to avoid unnecessary mileage. The shut-ins are also divided into four districts. My assistant and I endeavor to alternate in our visits to all the sick in the parish. I also have all my members listed according to streets arranged in alphabetical order and as time permits, I try to visit every home in a given street or a given neighborhood.

About three years ago we divided our church into 21 districts. In each district we have a deacon and a deaconess charged with the responsibility of assisting the pastors in maintaining contact with the membership of the church. The deacons are elected by the congregation as a part of our official board, the Church Council consisting of 6 elders, 9 trustees and 21 deacons. The 21 deaconesses are appointed by the Board of Elders upon recommendation of the pastor. Each deacon and deaconess has from 50-100 families under his and her care. They endeavor to visit each family once a year; they visit the sick and shut-in of their district; they conduct a general pre-lenten visitation of the entire congregation on the Sunday before Ash Wednesday to extend a personal invitation to all members to attend the Lenten services. They also report special cases of need or grievances to the pastor. I have found this system invaluable in keeping in touch with the membership of my church.

The city pastor of today has probably a new type of service to give that is becoming increasingly urgent in our generation. I am referring to the increasing number of mental cases and maladjusted that come to us for help and guidance. Almost one percent of our members are confined to the New York State Hospital for Mental Diseases and many more are on the verge of nervous breakdown. This is a condition that must be attributed to the terrific nervous strain and tension in modern life in industrial centers. An elementary knowledge of psychology and psychiatry is essential to every modern pastor. Some type of a Protestant

confessional seems to be an inevitable development of pastoral care. Happy is the pastor who has the confidence of his people to that degree that they will come to him and bare their souls in their quest for peace and poise in their difficult situations.

A few weeks ago a conference for clinical counselling was held in the Colgate Rochester Divinity School for pastors, institutional directors and social workers. It was held under the auspices of the Council for the Clinical Training of Theological Students which was organized about fifteen years ago to meet a growing need for more thorough training and preparation of the pastor for the care and cure of maladjusted personalities. In 1938 more than 60 theological students were trained in carefully selected centers such as the New York State Hospital for the Insane at Rochester, New York, the Bellevue Hospital in New York City, the Warwick School for Delinquent Boys in Westchester County. The year's training includes:

"Residence for at least one quarter in a mental hospital, where the student can be introduced to the more extreme kinds of personality disturbance. Staff meetings, seminar discussions, and conferences of the student with physician, psychiatrist, and theological supervisor form large elements in the program of training. Observations and contacts in the wards assume a prominent place in the student's learning. A working understanding is gained of the contribution of each of the various therapies of the hospital, such as the psychological, the social service, the occupational therapy, etc."

The remainder of the year's program may be elected from the following:

"Residence and study under trained supervision and instruction, for at least one quarter, in a penal or correctional institution where readjustment of the criminal to society is stressed."

"Residence and service under trained supervision and instruction for at least one quarter in a general hospital where the student may gain some understanding of the attitudes and problems of various types of illness and so a basis on which to visit the sick of his parish."

"Service for at least one quarter, under trained supervision and instruction, in a child guidance clinic or outpatient clinic, where

the student is drawn more nearly into the type of ministration which awaits him in his parish."

Here is a training opportunity that I would covet for every pastor in the Christian ministry. It aims, as one of the speakers said: "To get our theological feet on the ground." There are untold numbers of people in every community who need help and guidance in developing integrated and wholesome personalities. Every human being is in search of the good life. The Founder of Christianity gave us the phrase: "to have life and to have it more abundantly." To that good life at least two conditions are essential: (1) a reasonable inner peace and (2) some form of creativity or cooperation in a good cause.

The wise pastor will encourage his members to call on him for counsel. He will need to be in his study at specific hours. He should surround that study with utmost privacy. There are doubtless many cases that the pastor should refer to the psychiatrist or the physician. But the medical profession is learning at the same time to refer more and more cases to the clergyman.

The oft quoted statement of the eminent psychologist Jung deserves reference here: "During the past thirty years people from all the civilized countries of the earth have consulted me. Among my patients in the second half of life—that is to say over thirty-five—there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that everyone of them fell ill because he had lost that which the living religions of every age have given to their followers, and none of them has really been healed who did not regain his religious outlook."

#### IV. THE PASTOR AS ADMINISTRATOR

Whether we like it or not, the modern pastor must be the *business manager of his church*. It is here that many of us fail. It is the pastor who must not only teach in season and out of season the principles of stewardship, but who in the end must plan the details of raising the annual budget. As I scan the records of our churches in their giving to the apportionment for Kingdom causes, I am more and more convinced that our failures lie not so much in the unwillingness or inability of our congregations to

contribute their just share to the Lord's work, but rather in the lack of systematic and well-planned methods of enlisting the support of the congregation.

What I am saying is doubtless "old stuff" to many but it must be said again and again until we are aroused to meet the challenge of the world's need.

The best method of securing pledges for the annual budget of the congregation is the "Every Member Canvass" in which every member of the congregation is visited in his home.

We have on three occasions received the pledges in church and lost ground each time over the previous year. On two occasions we visited the homes of all members without exception to receive the annual pledges and each time showed a substantial increase. In previous years we allowed ten days for the visitation. Last year we visited 1500 homes on one Sunday afternoon. Our results were so gratifying that we agreed last year to repeat the plan this year.

Our principal device for securing payment of pledges in full is publicity. We cherish the good opinion of our fellow members. Last January the congregation voted to publish an honor roll of all members who paid their pledge in full for 1939. This had a very stimulating effect. More than 80 percent of our members were included in this group.

The pastor is not necessarily the chairman of the financial campaign. If he is wise he will give his laymen the opportunity for leadership but he will provide the plans and the inspiration to carry the project to victory.

The pastor is the *director of promotion for the local church*. He is the key, not only to the sound financial program of the congregation, but also to the Kingdom support which his congregation gives to the denominational program. Jeremiah's complaint—"Like priest, like people"—is also true in a good sense as well as in a derogatory sense. If the pastor is kingdom-minded, if the pastor is loyal to his denomination, his congregation will follow his leadership. Let us not excuse ourselves too easily on this score. The adequate support of our denominational program depends primarily on the whole-hearted devotion and loyalty of our pastors to the denomination which has accepted and ordained them to the ministry of Christ and His church.

The church must have a program. The pastor must not only plan for the immediate month or year ahead but for the long-range development of his congregation. He must constantly check the progress of the congregation in the fulfillment of that program and keep pace with the time schedule allotted for the attainment of his goals. After all, our years of service are limited. We must work while it is day. "The night cometh."

The modern church is a highly organized institution. Perhaps we have reached a point where excessive organization has become a hindrance rather than a help. We sometimes find ourselves so busy planning and promoting the activities of the organizations that we consume our energies "serving tables" instead of witnessing for Christ. Some of our organizations could profitably be eliminated. Many activities that the church once promoted are now taken over by community organizations, which are much better equipped and financed to do the job. In a downtown church large scale recreation programs, movies, clinics, employment agencies, may well be turned over to agencies that are able to provide these services better than the church has been able to do. The function of church organizations in the city situation can in most cases be limited to education, inspiration and fellowship. Any activity that tends to become an end in itself becomes a "lesser good" that obscures the real aim and function of the Christian church. The Christian Science churches have no organizational activities beyond the church school but as far as I have been able to observe these churches have not suffered from this almost total absence of organizational activity.

The pastor as administrator is concerned with the problem of effective publicity. An advertising man once referred to the church as the oldest advertiser in the world. Every church spire and every church bell proclaimed more eloquently and effectively than any printed or spoken word "Man does not live by bread alone."

The city pastor, however, will not content himself with these ancient and honorable instruments to call attention to the message of the church. He will cultivate the acquaintance of the church page editors of his community newspapers. He will use the bulletin boards in hotels and public places. He will avail himself

of opportunities over the radio. All legitimate methods will be used to call attention to the spiritual values and opportunities that the church offers to the community. He will advertise his church and its program but not himself.

In my ministry I find the weekly parish paper of immeasurable value in keeping our membership informed about our program. Mailing costs under the second class rate are next to nothing. The appearance of this little messenger from the church every week is a constant reminder to the members that they are a part of the fellowship of the church and that the church has a right to expect their support and cooperation in its worship and service.

#### V. THE PASTOR AND THE COMMUNITY

The community relations of the city pastor present opportunity for larger service but also a subtle temptation to neglect "the one thing needful." The pastor is a part of the community and it has a right to expect of him a definite contribution of time and service for the public good. But if he gives the major portion of his time and labor to community causes his congregation has just grounds for complaint. The minister must as a matter of conscience guard against too much participation in outside activities, however laudable their aims and purposes. We are justified in our participation in community enterprises only so far as these give us additional opportunities to glorify Christ and bear witness to His name.

We gather from this inadequate analysis of our task, that the ministry in our time is not a bed of roses. Not only democracy but Christianity itself, which is the source and wellspring of our noblest ideals of freedom and democracy, is fighting for its life. In large areas of the world the preaching of the gospel has been ruthlessly suppressed. In other large areas the Christian gospel has been emasculated, twisted, and perverted into a grotesque antithesis of its original content and character. In our own country the challenge of Christianity is meeting a rising tide of hostility and the bitter resentment of the exploited masses who are forced to live on the verge of starvation in a land of plenty.

If ever there was a time when Christian ministers need to preach with courage and conviction it is now. If ever there was



a time when sincerity and moral earnestness should mark the preaching of the gospel, it is now. The seriousness of the time makes imperative a re-examination of the truth we most certainly believe. As in the days of Gideon the Lord of hosts is saying to his people that have answered his call: "Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from Mt. Gilead" (Judges 7:3). Now as never before we must face the world with the eternal truth proclaimed by Peter and John before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem as they were told never again to speak in the name of Jesus. "Whether it be right to hearken unto men more than unto God, judge ye, for we cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard. For there is salvation in none other nor is there any other name given among men whereby we may be saved except the name of Jesus Christ our Lord." Those were brave words in a dangerous time, words which the apostles sealed with their martyred blood. When we show their faith we shall share their triumph. What more shall we say? I need not remind you that the shadow of war clouds are hovering very low over our homes and churches in this fair land. For months our fellow-Christians across the sea have been facing the terrors of hell. This has been a time of rude awakening. We have dreamed dreams of a warless world at a time when the most deadly instruments of death were being fashioned against the day when our dreams would be shattered and our fondest hopes reduced to ashes. We stand today as Christian ministers perplexed, dumfounded and dismayed. What shall we say? If we doggedly stand by those high-sounding resolutions which we formulated since the last war to end war, we sit in judgment of those brave people who today refuse to be cowed by the threat of horrible destruction, and stand ready to die for something which they hold more precious than life itself. If we oppose the preparedness program in our own country we invite totalitarianism to destroy the democratic tradition built upon these shores by our fathers through many years of heroic sacrifice and struggle.

If we approve of the fight to the finish against dictatorship and tyranny, if we approve the expenditure of billions of dollars for defense and the building of 50,000 planes and a two-ocean navy, we seem to be denying Him who said: "they that take the sword shall perish by the sword."

Perhaps our answer must be found in a new appraisal of the values that we cherished through the ages. We have been led to believe that life is the most sacred and highest value that life can hold. We have tended to regard the taking of life as the supreme evil and the preservation of life as the supreme virtue. This was not the faith of our fathers. To them there were values higher than life itself. I heard a Spanish loyalist, speaking in Rochester during the civil war in Spain, express the spirit of his comrades: "We would rather die on our feet than live on our knees." There are values in the Christian tradition that are greater than life itself. The sacredness of human personality, freedom of conscience, freedom of thought, speech and action, the essential solidarity of the human race, these are values that man at his noblest and best has ever been ready to defend with his life's blood. I believe these values to be rooted in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Christian minister must see clearly that humanity is tied together in one bundle and must reach his convictions in the light of that fundamental truth. If we shall ever be put to the test we know that Christian people will not fail to respond to the challenge.

But the Christian will know the limitations of force. He will look to the coming of a better world not by the power of man but by the obedience of man to the will of God. He knows that the world is not facing the sunset but the sunrise. It is always darkest before the dawn. History not only begins with God, it ends with God. This supreme conviction alone can make life tolerable in our time. To proclaim that truth and to live by that truth is our glorious privilege as servants of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Rochester, N. Y.



## THE CHURCH AND A WARRING WORLD

PROFESSOR ANDREW G. TRUXAL

Much as I might prefer to have my remarks sound a hopeful and optimistic note, I suspect they will have the opposite effect. However, my conscience will not trouble me if the comments are based on realistic thinking, somewhere near to the facts, rather than on wishful thinking and divorce from realities.

Let us start with certain elemental truths. Man has a number of basic drives, urges, instincts, it matters not what label we use. In response to these basic drives, hunger, sex, wish for security, he acts. These actions always take place in relation to his fellows. The actions of one individual interact with the responses of others so that by the process of interaction, accepted group ways of behavior are achieved. These in turn are at the core of all social institutions. On the animal level, the form of behavior is largely a direct response to an environmental stimulus. Between hunger and the object in the environment which will relieve that biological tension, there is a direct connection. But with man it is not so. Between the internal need and the external environment, there interpose the institutions of his group creativity. He responds not directly but rather in terms of this intermediate series. Between the hunger drive and its gratification there intervene his economic institutions; between the sex drive and its fulfillment, marriage and the family together with allied group dictates; likewise between his religious urge and its completion there are his religious institutions.

The mental corollaries of this are obvious. Man perceives his environment, physical, social and supersocial, not as it really is but in those terms to which his social conditioning in the family, school, church and larger society has habituated him to thinking of them. Man responds to the mental construct of his world and not to the world itself. This has been the theme of writers from Plato to Walter Lippmann. In his Allegory of the Cave, Plato demonstrates how the shadows on the wall constitute the real world for those who have ever lived with their eyes fixed on the inner wall of the cave. Francis Bacon's Idols of the Cave, the Marketplace, the Tribe and the Theatre are, in very truth, the

"shadows" which circumscribe and condition peoples' thoughts. Lippmann's notion of the stereotypes, or "the pictures in our heads," is nothing more than a popular presentation of that which is worked out in elaborate and philosophical detail by Vaihinger in his "Philosophy of As If."

Now let us hasten to say that we do not desire to commit ourselves to a philosophy of fictionalism with the possible pitfalls to which it leads. Likewise we would avoid resort to the doctrine of realism in which ideas alone have reality. Similarly we would escape from a modern version of relativism so extreme that it leads to latitudinarianism and anarchy whether in the field of science, of nationalism or of individual ethics. Our purpose in introducing the foregoing considerations was merely to emphasize the manner in which the individual and the group interacts.

A further elementary postulate must be made. At any particular time or place, society is made up not only of a variety of social institutions together with their appropriate structures, functions and mental contents, but also these institutions tend to form a pattern of integration. When, for example, we speak of the culture pattern of Medieval Europe, we can dissect that pattern into its various constituent elements: political, economic, familial, linguistic, artistic and religious. This dissection also reveals that certain institutions are more important than others in characterizing the society. In this case, the dominant institutions of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were the religious. The influence that the Church had on the governments of the time, on the family, on economic affairs in dictating rules concerning the "just price," on education, the arts, yes on war itself, shows not merely how these various phases of life interacted, but also the dominant core about which the integration was centered. Similarly, an analysis of contemporary society would tend to show that the church and religion have been replaced in their dominant position by scientific, industrial and political institutions.

This preliminary discussion of man, social institutions, ideologies and societal patterns has been necessary as a backdrop against which to view our problem of the church in a warring world. If it be asked directly,—what can the church do to pre-

vent war in the modern world, the answer would seem to be—not much! While I may be thoroughly convinced that resort to arms is contrary to the spirit and teachings of Jesus, that the brotherhood of man implies an internationalism of equality, nevertheless, the contemporary world is not fashioned according to this idealistic picture and this is the world in which we live.

Someone is certain to say, at this point, resorting to the clichés of an age which regarded the mind of man as a faculty capable of making a completely voluntaristic decision,—“I will not compromise with the world. I will be an out-and-out pacifist.” The trouble with this position is clear. The individual sets himself over against society and imagines a great gulf fixed. In actual fact, the individual and the social are two aspects of the same thing. To be a human being is to be a social being. As individuals, we have been so “compromised” by social influences in those earliest years of life before we had the slightest awareness of what was happening that for an individual to renounce society is pure fol-de-rol.

This is not to imply that individual Christians in the modern world cannot and do not renounce all war. Such a decision can be reached intellectually as we saw in the last war. But such individuals must realize that they cannot hope to persuade many people to side with them and that they are electing martyrdom. Some of you may be convinced that this kind of self-inflicted martyrdom has great benefit in the modern world. I am not so sure. Certainly such renunciation of war by large masses of the population, when war is actually present, is impossible for reasons which will become apparent as we proceed.

Only a few years ago, 12,076 clergymen in America went on record as affirming that their churches should refuse to sanction or support any future war. Of this number, 10,427 stated that they individually would not sanction any future war or participate as armed combatants. You may be more optimistic about the future conduct of these religious leaders than I am. About the time these men made their declarations of convictions, a similar statement was being made by a large number of Canadian clergymen. One of my colleagues at Columbia University, who teaches in a Canadian University, told me just the other day that

all but a very few of these same clergymen are today supporting the war efforts of Canada. That some few of our leaders will carry out their pledge is to be taken for granted. That the vast majority of them will not, in the event we actively enter into war, I firmly believe. To label the latter as less heroic than the former may be a fallacy.

Conditions change so rapidly that the mature judgments of yesterday seem outmoded today. Our memories are not so short that we cannot recall the powerful peace movements in the world of 1910 to 1912. Hague Conferences and International Peace were everywhere in the air. When Carnegie created his endowment for the promotion of peace, he made the provision that if the goal for which the fund was created were achieved, as it appeared it soon would be, the trust might be used for some other worthy humanitarian purpose. It was a tragically short interval between a statement like that and the outbreak of the first world war. The “outlawing of war as an instrument of national policy”—does that phrase sound to your ears now as though it must have been coined in some far-distant past?

To say that wars occur because of the totality of the interaction of various institutions at a given time is not to exculpate the Christian religion and the church from having been unable in the past to prevent wars. It is merely to reassert that the church always interacts with other institutions. To be sure, the earliest Christians, when they were a despised sect in the Roman Empire, did renounce war and refuse to bear arms in the service of the state. But once Christianity had triumphed and still later, when it was extending its sway northward and westward among the Germanic peoples, the bishops did not hesitate to bless the bloody achievements of those armed forces which were on the side of orthodoxy. When the Church had unquestioned power over the lives of all the peoples of Europe, it did mitigate the evils of feudal wars by its Truce of God and Peace of God, but it also let loose the fury of its armed might against the Infidel and against the Heretic. The sense of triumph experienced at St. Peter's in Rome on the announcement of the massacre of thousands on St. Bartholomew's Day has its parallel in the equally bloody conquests of Protestants over Catholics.

The only possible way we can understand these episodes is not to see them as the failure of religion, as though this were an isolated phenomenon, but rather as the resultant of all the forces operating at the time. That the prevailing culture fashions the thinking of people is so obvious when we observe the way in which religious rationalizations are used to cloak the desires of the group. Some years ago, a student of mine became interested in going through the books, periodicals and religious literature of the North and South prior to the Civil War. The northern pulpits could thunder that slavery was outlawed by God; the southern champions of religion could demonstrate with equal effectiveness that human slavery was divinely ordained. Ray Abrams' "Preachers Present Arms" ought to be read again and again by all of us if we have any doubts about the inability of the church to avoid giving expression to the prevailing spirit of the times.

The common fallacy of blaming Christianity because it does not prevent war is apparent in Mark Twain's "The Mysterious Stranger." Satan, the angel, satirizes man's progress by referring to the increase in the power of destruction. "You perceive that you have made continuous progress. Cain did his murder with a club; the Hebrews did their murders with javelins and swords; the Greeks and Romans added protective armor and the fine arts of military organization and generalship; the Christian has added guns and gunpowder; a few centuries from now he will have so greatly improved the deadly effectiveness of his weapons of slaughter that all men will confess that without Christian civilization war must have remained a poor and trifling thing to the end of time."

No, the answer to the problem does not lie in the false transcription to Christianity of responsibility for the use to which man has put his scientific and technological advances. In a long-time perspective of cultural change, I believe, with William Graham Sumner, that war will be outmoded and outgrown. It will go the way of cannibalism, of infanticide and of human slavery. If this is the long-time direction of societal change, the most we can hope to do is either to retard or to accelerate this desired objective. From a very practical point of view, we can do something. Al-

though that "something" is not the abolition of war today, we can lend our efforts to speeding up the process by which the world will some day renounce all war.

Now it would seem to be true that the only possible method of speeding up the process of ridding the world of war would be a thorough understanding of the causes of war together with a kind of world leadership capable of and ready to take action on the basis of that knowledge. While recent research may still be far from having attained a complete comprehension of all the causes leading to modern war, of one thing we seem to be relatively certain, namely, that war cannot be reduced to a single causative factor. Herein may reside one of the reasons why the voice of the Church has been so ineffectual in its attacks on the war problem. Too many of our religious utterances resort to an oversimplification of the causes of war and to the resultant magical solution of the difficulty by a kind of verbal exorcism. "Wars are caused by human selfishness,"—therefore, by implication, if we make all people unselfish, we will have no war. "The gospel of the Prince of Peace has never been tried,"—so let us try it and immediately wars will cease. "The world is a great arena where the forces of good and evil are forever struggling for the ascendancy. The evil forces lead to wars and the forces of good lead to peace. Such a statement as this, reiterating the Persian conception of a universal dualism carries with it the pious hope that in some distant future, the City of God will triumph over the City of Man.

Here we do not want to be misunderstood. The theologians through their dogmas of the depravity of man and the need for redemption gave us an interpretation of individual and social conflict which could be resolved only in religious and supernatural ways. The twentieth century is willing to give them full credit for the statement of the problem but not for their method of solution. Advances in the studies of anthropology, genetics, biology and psychology have changed our understanding of both the genesis and the methods of resolving these conflicts. Notwithstanding all these advances, it still remains true that the natural desires of man are in conflict with his accumulated social idealism. Unless a very significant biological mutation were to



appear suddenly changing the basic nature of man, this conflict will continue and no platitudes of an exhortatory nature are going to dispose of them. Here I speak as a sociologist and not a transcendental theologian.

This is not to affirm that the divergence between man's natural propensities and the heritage of noble sentiments socially derived is not a cause of war. It is rather to state that to make of immorality the sole cause of war is to fall into the error of explaining nothing by the device of explaining everything in terms of a single cause. It is of the same order as those popular modern shibboleths such as—"Wars are made by and for the munition makers," "The banking house of J. P. Morgan and Co. and allied international financiers got us into the last war." "The military party in every country is the sole agency responsible for war." These may be good rallying cries around which to organize those who have any reason to distrust the manufacturers of the instruments of warfare, or those whose interests are jeopardized by those in the high-places of finance-capital, or those who have a dislike of the military mind. Taken by itself, each is as inadequate as an explanation of the reasons for war as is the moralistic argument considered apart from other variables.

What we have been learning is that wars are the products of total situations. They grow out of the entire culture of the age. They can be understood only in terms of the total pattern and this implies a multi-causal explanation. Let us mention a few of these causes, bearing in mind the fact that each does not appear in reality as an isolate but rather in interaction with all the others:—1. Economic factors, such as capitalism with its necessity for expanding markets and search for investment opportunities; the expansion of industrialism to previously backward areas so that these latter become industrial competitors with the older industrial nations. An era of free trade is followed by protective tariffs, most-favored nation treaties, reciprocal trade agreements, cartels and barter. This kind of warfare had been going on for decades prior to the present struggle in arms. 2. Political factors, such as the exaltation of the national state to a position above law and restraint. The unlimited sovereignty of national entities inevitably leads to international anarchy since every such entity

is the sole judge of that which is in its interests. The development of integral nationalism would appear to be the ne plus ultra of modern ethnocentric tribalism. The "frontier" becomes the sacred symbol of national pride. National self-respect cannot run the risk of settling by arbitration disputes involving that other sacrosanct concept, national honor. 3. The militaristic complex which we hand on to our children through our folk heroes, our hymns, songs and traditions. 4. Social Darwinism which emphasizes the necessity for war as an avenue of social and cultural progress, analogous to the biological survival of the species. 5. Population growth and pressures. 6. Mass psychoses, emphasizing frustrations, the doctrine of the elect, blood, race and other myths.

To mention these few causes of wars is to indicate the fundamental difficulty society will have in eliminating war. The rôle of the Church, in whatever form organized religion may take as a result of the revolutionary era in which we are now living, seems clear enough. It will be to provide the moral and spiritual dynamic to the other institutions of the culture which will be working out the methods of removing the basic causes of war. The Church can lend its support to agencies working for a world organization as a substitute for the present segmented arrangement of completely autonomous states. The Church can and must uphold the hands of those endeavoring to effect a return of free trade, of the internationalization of the supply of raw materials and world resources. With the institutions of the family and the school, the Church can strive to effect a basic change in the conditioning of children to a pacifistic rather than a militaristic complex. To be sure this cannot come in isolated cases or in small groups but must become a world program of the future. Hand in hand with science the Church can and must see that the fruits of man's diligent research are utilized not for destructive but for constructive ends. When the crude supernaturalisms of a primitive mentality are finally replaced by a social ethic socially derived, then the Church can place the full weight of its moral dynamic behind such an ethic.

To be sure, these sound like long-time goals but what of the here and now? On this score, as indicated above, I confess to



unmitigated pessimism. Products as we are of the social institutions which we have inherited from our past, the logical result of such a total cultural situation would appear to point to the continuance of war for a time. The world in which we live is so exceedingly complex that no matter how earnestly we will it, it is impossible for us to form independent judgments concerning world events based on the facts. Daily we are invited to express opinions or to vote on such highly complicated matters as placing an embargo on the shipment of goods to Japan, of making another loan to China, of defense for the western hemisphere, of a lease-lend bill. On some of these questions it would be possible, if we had the time and energy, to get an approximation to the facts. Because we have neither the time nor the energy and furthermore because the facts are not readily accessible, we tend to follow those leaders of public opinion in whom we happen to have confidence. When we add to this inability the situation as it exists in large areas of the world today, where peoples' minds are allowed access only to such information as suits the group in power to supply them, it becomes readily obvious why our thinking will be increasingly done for us and that it will be done en masse.

It is conceivable, in the abstract, that if a person were endowed with omniscience and could look on, from the outside, at the madness which now prevails in Europe, he might with such knowledge come to the conclusion that both sides in the struggle were equally in the wrong. But since such omniscience is not within the reach of any but psychotic individuals, it follows that we cannot avoid thinking and believing that our way of life is for us the best. The socialists would have us believe that democratic capitalism and imperialism have made grave errors for which now we must atone. Because of these errors, is that sufficient reason why I shouldn't choose to preserve such relative freedoms as I possess rather than to surrender them all? Is that any cause why I can't elect to live in my accustomed way rather than under a regime of force and fear? It may be that the critics of modern democracies are quite right in accusing us of the loss of the will to live. Certainly recent history has shown that the liberalisms we have been teaching and living are poor defenses against a world that views human nature as Machiavelli did, and considers the governance

of things to belong rightfully to the nation with the largest tanks and the greatest willingness to die for the omnipotent state.

When I read H. Rauschning's first book, "The Revolution of Nihilism," I discounted a great deal of what he said on the ground that the words were coming from a renegade to the Nazi cause. But when his second book, "The Voice of Destruction" appeared, giving quotations of conversations held five years previously and these words were being carried out literally on the battlefields of Europe (these latter events transpiring after the publication of the work), I must confess to a personal conversion. It is no accident that our nation is rapidly becoming galvanized around national defense. I venture to guess that most of you in your positions of leadership are rallying your people behind this program. We can have no misconceptions about the nature of the steps we are taking. They will mean the temporary (we hope) sacrifice of some of our cherished liberalisms; they will mean the possibility of war sooner than we like to think; but they will also mean the giving of the answer—We will to live, to those who have been telling us that we haven't and can no longer have such a will.

I am not asking any of you to accept my position on this whole problem. I realize that there can be one of several answers to the issue so far as the individual is concerned:—

1. An individual may run away to the South Sea islands, literally or figuratively speaking.
2. An individual may come to the conviction that wars never solve anything, that all wars are absolutely unChristian, and so, at the risk of self-martyrdom, refuse to bear arms. With this position we can have considerable sympathy, even though we may question the assertion that war is never justified.
3. An individual finds himself willing to follow the ways of his group in the hope of being able to use his influence to bring a better world out of the crisis and suffering.

What the isolated individual will do in times of war is somewhat variable; what the church as an institution will do is clear enough. If the previous analysis has any validity, we shall expect that the churches will support the struggle of the nation in the event of our participation in war. Personally, I shall be willing

to perform whatever services I can in what I shall earnestly believe is the cause of the group of which I am a part, but I trust that, in the process, I shall not be guilty of making Christ a War-Lord.

The fate of the Christian Church in a number of countries in recent years together with what must be resigned fatalism on the part of millions of devout Christians who have experienced the scourges of war during the past year and a half, these facts have caused many to raise the query,—Can Christianity survive another War? The question, when phrased in this manner, doesn't make much sense. If what is meant is the Church in its organized external form, there may be grave doubts as to whether it will survive the contemporary world revolution in anything like its present form. But if the framers of the question have in mind the individual and social values discovered and made explicit in the life of Jesus, then there can be no doubt but that these will survive any catastrophe.

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## THE TIMELINESS OF PREACHING\*

GERHARD W. GRAUER

Preaching is no easy task. In fact it is a humiliating experience to preach. One endeavors to master the art of preaching and finds that the best efforts fall far short of one's own ideal of preaching. And if we dare judge our preaching by the results in the attitudes and reactions of our congregations in life-situations, then we are even more discouraged. The results of preaching are so intangible and the world, at the present particularly, seems to have been so slightly affected by truly great preaching, that we are often tempted to take up some easier task, or at least to define the ministry in new terms which would demote preaching to the side-lines. By such a method we can rationalize and excuse our ineffectiveness as preachers.

We are not surprised when the suggestion is offered that there be a moratorium on preaching. The candidates of the ministry according to such a theory should be trained in other arts and sciences. They should become counselors, psychiatrists, religious educators, priests or pastors. And yet it is well to remind ourselves that preaching has been effective in the past. Luther, Calvin, John Knox, Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, and Moody, to name only a few, affected the world by their preaching. We have the statement that preaching was a profitable and adequate method for its time, but that day is definitely past. And yet, I wonder if the spoken word is not the most powerful method of winning people to any cause. I am sure the President thinks so. The newspapers were not at all enthused, to state it mildly, when he ran for a third term. What was his method? His "My Friends" and fireside chats won millions of votes. Hitler, we know, uses the same method. His speeches make for unity and strength. America has been called the Luncheon Club country. Hundreds of thousands of men meet in every city, village and hamlet, to listen to some speaker. His message may be good, bad, or indifferent. The pen may be mightier than the sword, but the

\* A lecture on the Charles S. McCauley Foundation delivered in Santee Chapel, Feb. 4, 1941, by the minister of the Philippus Church, Cincinnati, Ohio.

spoken word is more powerful than the pen or typewriter in our day and age. Jesus, of course, we remember was not a great author, but came preaching. It would be well to remind ourselves of a very simple fact that most of us would admit. Some preaching has affected our thinking and our life. Some men have said to us what we needed to hear. Buttrick, I believe it is, reminds us that "the sermons of Micah, John the Baptist and Jesus will outlast the decisions of Napoleon, Hitler or Mr. Roosevelt, and will outlive the pyramids."

Preaching is important if we consider it only from the point of view of simple mathematics. After all a larger or smaller number of people has come to the church for an hour or hour and a half. We, as preachers, are given not 30 minutes, but 300, 500 or 1000 times one half hour of people's time. We are making that many pastoral calls. Moreover we need waste no time speaking about the World Series, Johnny's cold, or Mary's disappointed love affair, but can come to the real business of our profession.

The Fathers who defined the Protestant Church as the place where the sacraments are distributed and the Gospel is preached after all were realists.

Preaching is still the most important task of the minister's week. There's excitement connected with it. For something might happen as a result of it. Souls have been saved, and lives have been changed by sermons. We need remind ourselves only of such events as Aldersgate or the little chapel where Stanley Jones found himself by finding God. Preaching is important, for we are not merely endeavoring to entertain or present a beautiful homily, but we are seeking a verdict. Stand before the congregation, the next time you preach, and try to visualize the spiritual and practical possibilities in that congregation and you will be impressed with the importance of your preaching.

But honestly I have been wondering why you ask a pastor to deliver this series of lectures. Perhaps you will be wondering too before I finish. But seriously, you are being instructed by a man who has been chosen because he knows the field of preaching. You are studying the masters and reading the best books on the subject. Perhaps someone will suggest that the active preacher, preaches more often than some men who write well on the subject.

But if I remember correctly, Mr. Bryan ran for the Presidency often, but not very successfully. The fact that we preach often is not a guarantee that we preach well. I am reminded of that story that is so often repeated among social workers and child psychologists: A social worker asked a mother to attend a number of lectures which were to be delivered on child care. The mother inquired who would present that series of lectures. She was told that a certain Miss So-and-so would teach. The mother said: "Miss So-and-so. She ain't had no kids. What can she tell me? Ain't I a mother? Ain't I lost seven?" Preaching often is hardly a recommendation for the delivery of lectures at a Seminary on preaching. And I wish to assure you that I hope to benefit more by your reactions and discussion than you will benefit by any suggestion that I might make. Moreover I wish to admit that every preacher finds it difficult to state just what his method is; not that it is disorganized but it is difficult to state the method used in this very fine art of preaching.

We have taken as the basis of our first lecture, "The Timeliness of Preaching." We prefer the term "timely" to "modern." Modernity has a sense of immediacy in it; modern after all means just now. Timeliness, on the other hand, suggests opportune, in season, at the proper time, and includes the good in the term modern as well.

The preacher of today can no longer depend upon certain ancient customs and habits to fill his church on Sundays. Most Protestants no longer believe in an infallible book. The minister at one time was a very learned man and since he was so exceptionally learned he demanded a hearing. Today he is no longer the only learned man in town. Moreover there is no social compulsion which makes men attend the church to be considered respectable. But someone has pointed out that Jesus also did not get his congregation by any such shibboleths. And yet the very fact that those ancient compunctions have disappeared is an added challenge to us to become good preachers.

In times gone by, one proved a truth by pointing out what antiquity said about it. Today the truths of ancient days must be stated in modern terms or they will have no hearing. Books of Philosophy and Theology are still written tracing the history



of an idea as for instance Schweitzer's masterpiece. A recent book on Forgiveness tells us of the Theology of Albrecht Ritschl and Karl Barth relative to the idea of forgiveness, but the contents of such a book would be of no value for preachers unless the truth contained therein can be translated into timely terms.

But let us approach our problem. How can the sermon be timely? The first suggestion is almost too simple. Learn to know people, your own people, and other people. Phillips Brooks said over a half century ago: "Know your congregation as thoroughly as you can. Know your congregation so largely and deeply that in knowing it you shall know humanity." Study their needs. Learn of their headaches and heartaches. Know their problems. That would suggest pastoral visitation. One learns to know people by going into their homes and learning of their real problems and attempting to understand the difficult situations of modern life. The social conditions of today, the poverty and consequent relief, the continued unemployment, the understanding of youth with its great ambition and its meager opportunity, all offer us a possibility of preaching timely sermons. And yet someone has reminded us that there are really two classes of people today, those who are overworked, and those who have no work at all. But the fact that a minister makes many calls is no guarantee that he preaches timely sermons. He may be so aloof, he may be so much of the cleric, he may be an impractical pious parson and therefore be not at all aware of the problems of life in his parish. Sometimes door-bell ringers, as such parsons are often called, become petty in their preaching and speak more of the gossip, than the Gospel. But it is well for us to heed the word of the experienced pastor who tells us, "That we should know our fleshly volumes in our parish better than the volumes on our shelves." The timely preacher on the other hand, is not merely the popular, pep-talking, joker of town who knows all the barbershop talk and the gossip of the town. Timeliness would not only include a knowledge of what is going on in the pew, but would also include some knowledge of the temper of our times. Buttrick in his Yale Lectures on Preaching defines the mind of that time as "A worthy mind, a mind of revolt, a scientific mind and a sceptical mind." But that series, I would

remind you, was delivered in 1930 not '40 and if we were to define the mind of our time, it would be more difficult. Perhaps the best term we could apply to the mind of our time, would be the term "confused." Men today are prone to overlook the judgments of history; they have not benefited by the laws of history; they trust saviours, if they trust anything at all, who hearken back to an authority and philosophy that did not stand the test of time and was found wanting. Surely we do not live in a scientific age, for warfare, especially modern warfare is not only unchristian, it is unscientific, unreasonable and irrational.

Unfortunately, much of our preaching has been very modern in the weak sense of the word. It has been too timely. We often hear older men say that they cannot use the old sermons from their barrels. They smile and wonder how the congregation stood for that type of preaching. Well, in all honesty, many of those men were appreciated in their early days in the ministry. Why can't they use them now? Why has the barrel dried up? I wonder if it is not true, that much of our preaching has been true for the moment. We have overstressed the importance of today. We were so anxious to be contemporary that our message was quite temporary. Jesus is our great contemporary because his message was timely and timeless. He did not say "Jews love the Romans" he said "love your enemies." He failed to settle the strife between the two brothers but said: "Beware of covetousness." He didn't say "The Kingdom of God is here." He said, "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is here," and yet if it were here, there would be no need of repentance. It is a Kingdom that is here and yet never here. Our recognition that it is not here makes it possible.

The Mind of today has lost self-confidence and therefore trusts Force and Power and fails to recognize that not only weakness is sin, but strength is sin, for possessing power makes us sinful. Power is hardly ever used, it is always misused. Our world has grown hard. The world is weary and tired. We indeed live in an age of confusion. The old convictions are no longer trusted. Someone has said, That men are not really worried much about the war, and we cannot understand why they are not, but they are worried about something to which they can cling, that will outlast the war.



A truly timely sermon must have some quality of timelessness in it. We do not merely preach to people. We have a Gospel to preach to people. We are endeavoring to convince people of some great truth, or proclaim some glad tidings. A timely sermon would endeavor to combine the two ideas. As of old "We Preach Christ," but we know as did Paul for he was a realist, "To the Jews a stumbling block and unto the Gentiles foolishness" (1 Cor. 1, 23).

Our danger today undoubtedly is that we stress the timeliness and the modern viewpoint and forget the great underlying truths that govern life.

Our second thought is therefore a corrective to much of modern preaching. Preaching, to be truly timely, should be the Whole Gospel. It is true that many people do not understand the terms we use, but when we use terms long enough they begin to understand their meaning. We for a while preached an individual *or* a social Gospel. I am not going into a long discussion and plead for an individual or a social point of view but suggest that there always was and always will be a social as well as an individual application of the Gospel. I recognize that the day in which we live insists that we apply the Gospel to men's problems which are very largely social problems but I believe the whole Gospel would be the best answer to the problem. We are "individuals in a world of crowds" as Luccock so cleverly puts it. All social problems are basically individual problems: To quote the splendid sermon of Dr. Michaelides "we saw that behind the economic and national causes of war, for example, there were such other causes as jealousy, pride, selfishness, lovelessness and sin. Our basic problems are still moral and spiritual." We have all witnessed the growth of the sects that emphasize the individual, to think of only a few, The Buchmanites, the New Thoughters and the Christian Scientists. A timely message will recognize the individual and society. It will benefit by reading Kierkegaard, who reminds us that Christ would not have been crucified by any individual, but only as individuals organized and worked together could they perpetrate such a crime. And we remember Dr. Niebuhr's "Moral Man and Immoral society" which had as its basic thesis the same thought. Dr. Niebuhr states that he would

not use that title today, for no man is moral. (Parenthetically we add, off the record, that "Reinie" wrote the book before he knew Hitler.) Timely preaching, it is my opinion, would recognize both elements in the total Gospel of Christ. It would not be satisfied to preach an individual Gospel which is so remote from everyday problems that it would not be vital, and yet it would not preach a social Gospel which so often has been so utopian and humanistic that it contained little Gospel. Timely preaching would preach the Whole Gospel to the Whole Man.

I would like to quote from a sermon by Professor Dinsmore to a graduating class of Yale Divinity School; "This is an age dominated by the scientific spirit. Within a few weeks we have crushed the atom, and have used waves of light as standards of light as stands of measurement to correct our yardsticks. So absorbed are our preachers in the results of scientific investigation that they are more eager to pick up the crumbs that fall from the table of Millikan and Eddington than to banquet with Jesus. Beyond any question the master thought today is not the relationship between man and his God, but the relationship of man with his fellows. There is danger that our ministers become merely ethical teachers and social agitators. There is a real peril that we think of the kingdom of God too materialistically. We are making the same mistake as the Jews in the time of Christ. They thought of the kingdom in terms of political liberty; we are thinking of it in terms of economic liberty. Not for any such kingdom was a cross with its agony and bloody sweat set up outside a city wall. The kingdom of heaven is to come not by the violence of partisan propaganda but by the contagion of quickened spirits."

There are certain rules that should be observed:

Simplicity is one of these rules. In many of the old Reformed Churches, especially in the middle West, they were accustomed to a High pulpit-centered Church. The preacher often, too often, literally spoke down to the people, or preached over their heads. Unfortunately that has often been true. Youthful preachers, perhaps more than the older ones, use terms and present thoughts that literally and allegorically are over the heads of the congregation. The Pulpit is hardly a place to prove our

knowledge of Bergson, Nietzsche or even Barth. Laymen tell us that preachers often speak in terms that are absolutely foreign to them. And often our thinking is so involved that they cannot begin to get the idea which we are endeavoring to present. You young men of the seminary are as prone to make that mistake as we are who are in the active pastorate. Let us remind ourselves that many theological expressions that we understand perfectly are not understood by the congregation. Even the knowledge of scripture which we take for granted is quite complimentary on our part, but the average pew-holder does not know that quick reference to some scripture passage. Most of the books on preaching remind us to use good simple English. The great classics in the English language seem to value monosyllabic words. Dr. Zwemer in "The Art of listening to God" has a humorous illustration; A shoe black according to the Christian Science monitor had the following sign printed: "Pedal habiliments artistically lubricated and illuminated with ambidexterous facility for the infinitesimal remuneration of 5 cents per operator." Muddled theological thinking often results in even more obscure terms. I am not trying to suggest that our thinking should be shallow, heaven forbid, and may I remind you that shallow thinking can be couched in involved terms and that quite successfully too. Kierkegaard has a sarcastic illustration relative to his great friend, the preacher Grundtvig: "A Tuba can sometimes sound such deep tones that one hears nothing at all, and one can only be sure that there is something happening if one is standing very close to him and notices the convulsive movements of his mouth and throat. In the same way Grundtvig sometimes looks so deep down into history, that one sees nothing at all; but it is certainly deep to say the least." And, friends, the laymen would say that the Tribe of Grundtvigs has increased.

From my limited experience and from statements I have heard from laymen, I believe that more ministers fail in this regard than most of us imagine. Now of course we can rationalize about that weakness. We are always preaching to the most intellectual in the group, we are trying to raise the standards of thinking, of language, and of diction in our congregations. This is particularly true when there are clergymen present. We must prove

that we are well read. We often wonder why there are few family pews in the modern church, and forget that we seldom think of the Junior consistory members who also have come, supposedly to listen to a sermon. Jesus surely observed the rule of simplicity.

The style of preaching has changed a great deal in recent years. Boaz says: "Preaching is less ornate and more direct. It has less flowers and more facts. It is less orotund (he could have used a simpler word) and more direct. There is an old adage which says: "All great men have been simple men." Perhaps it is also true, that all great preaching has been simple preaching.

I have an old friend to whom I listen often. In every sermon I have heard him preach he has used some Latin, Greek and German phrases. At least he has the courtesy to translate them as he goes on. It seems to me we often use a foreign language and do not even hesitate long enough to translate it into modern terms. But I know some of you will remind me that the Idea of Incarnation, of God entering history, is not a simple thought. Or you might ask; How can one make Immortality simple? Friends, the mysterious is simple. I often wonder if the child does not understand Bethlehem better than we do. Pentecost, we remember, reminds us that the message was heard by all in their own tongue, and that's true. Any message can only be understood in one's own tongue.

It is the great Hocking who states: "Nothing is true that can't be made interesting." That wouldn't be a bad motto, to be placed on our desk. Not only should we state the fact in interesting fashion, but the idea itself should be interesting. When I went to the Seminary we spent months on the North and South Galatian theory. When I went to Yale I even learned what Dr. Porter and the great scholar, Bacon, thought concerning it. I brought it into a sermon early in my ministry, I have forgotten in what context, and I am sure my congregation did also. Dean Brown, you will pardon me for quoting him often, and perhaps using his ideas more often than I even recognize, for I took much of my work on preaching from him, used to tell us that a sermon on the Hittites and Hivites and their relative cultures would hardly make any man break out the end of his pew because of

excitement or interest. Make your message interesting. It must be interesting to you or you wouldn't be preaching about it. Make it live. Think it through. It may be a deep and involved thought, but you can translate it into simpler, more understandable terms. A good mathematics teacher can take a deep theorem and explain it to his students so that they understand it. In this connection Dr. Coffin makes a practical suggestion which might be helpful. He believes that it would be good for us to write above our sermon not only the topic and text, but our purpose, what we intend accomplishing by the preaching of this sermon. What are you trying to teach, prove or show? How and in what way are you trying to affect the thinking or living of your congregation? Think it out clearly, speak freely and frankly relative to that particular purpose. It is not necessary to point out that an interesting discourse is not necessarily good preaching, but a sermon is not heard or received unless it is interesting.

If we wish to preach timely sermons we must begin where the people are. We must begin with things with which people are familiar. Our question might be, "What are they speaking about, and what should they speak about and aren't?" Of course we should not stop where they are. Jesus was the master in that art. You remember his experience at the well. The woman was permitted to begin the conversation and give it direction but only for a while, for Jesus lifted it to the highest plane. What are men thinking today? They spend much time in factories. Mass-production breeds mass-mentality. Man is lost in mechanics and that has been a dehumanizing process. As Davies puts it, "Man has conquered nature only to fall victim to the instrument by which he emancipated himself from nature." To quote Buttrick, "It is a coincidence, perhaps ironic, perhaps providential that at the moment when psychology has uncovered the depths of selfhood, civilization should condemn us to the shallows of a fragmentary, harassed and machine driven existence." Think of the effect of the radio and the movie, the conscription act, the newspaper, and we begin to estimate that we live in days of mass mentality. This world today needs a message of the worth of man; needs to be encouraged to find a new humanity for

men, a new sanctity of human life. "Things are in the saddle and ride mankind," is not merely a clever phrase. Evil seems to be winning most of the battles and "right is forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne." An English rector preached a Christmas sermon in 1939 on the text, "The Word became flesh" and suggests to his listeners that Christmas is an everlasting reminder that God enters history and that Christmas is an ever-recurring festival which reminds us that God rules the world, not the Devil, even though it often seems that his satanic majesty reigns. That preacher began where the people were, but he didn't stay there.

Timely preaching would have as its motive the life of men. Bell writes a book on "Religion for Living." According to our definition there is no other kind of religion. We do not try to lead men back to the days of Galilee, neither do we suggest monasticism as an escape from life. We preach to help men live a better, nobler, more Christian life. Many men today would like the church to speak less of living. You will hear men say that they would like to go to church for refuge, and there forget the war, forget the economic situation and think of God. Christianity is no escape from reality, when it is truest to its founder. It is to fit us to face reality. If preaching is to affect life, then the greatest reward in the ministry will come to you when you see that certain of your people are slowly adjusting their lives relative to some important issue of life. On the other hand your greatest disappointment will not be when someone informs you, "You didn't do so well today, you missed the bus" but at such a time when your congregation is called upon to be forgiving and big, and is small and vituperative.

A timely sermon would have a quality of sympathy in it. That strain is peculiarly absent from much of what we have called prophetic preaching. In fact I have often wondered why certain men think that prophecy and sarcasm are synonymous. Many of us are tempted to make very unkind statements from the pulpit that would be challenged if we were to say them from any other vantage point. Stand up for your convictions, state them in no uncertain terms, but permit the sympathetic approach to enter your message. There was judgment in the message of



Jesus. There is a judgment of history, no doubt of that, but let us ever remember that in our case it is a matter of one sinner standing in judgment over another. Psychology has been having a rather difficult time convincing many of us that a sympathetic approach is the most effective approach.

Another rule which applies also to timely preaching is the rule of variety. There is the threadbare story of the Baptist preacher who had been a convert rather late in life. He always spoke of the necessity of adult baptism by immersion. He referred to it in every sermon. His congregation was thoroughly convinced that he was right. That teaching was not considered heretical, and yet they grew tired of hearing about it so often. Finally the deacons decided to give him a text late on a certain Saturday evening and asked him to preach on that text on the following day. They chose the text: "And the cock crew." On Sunday morning he arose when the time came to preach, and read his text and said, "This text is very interesting, it suggests a very natural outline. First, we will speak about the cock call which in this story is the voice of conscience. Secondly, the 'crew,' suggests the voice of conscience calling to repentance, Thirdly, of course, true repentance will lead to conversion, and to baptism by immersion." Variety is the spice of life, and a necessity in preaching. We all know men whose third point is always Foreign Missions. Older men are tempted to do as the hymnwriters, who almost without exception ended their hymns with the thought of eternal life. Modernism and recent preaching, almost without exception, always had the same three points: First, How the ethic of Jesus, his Gospel, or this text, if applied, would affect international situations. Second, How they would affect the labor problem, economics and employment. Thirdly, How they would affect the Race problem. Recently a fourth point has been added by some, and it is ecumenicity. Of course we all want to speak on those issues. They are important, most important, but a sermon need not be made up those four parts Sunday after Sunday. William Lyon Phelps, in his most interesting autobiography, points out that most of us enjoy the same breakfast almost every day of our life, but that when lunch or dinner is served we enjoy change and variety. Sermons are like lunch or dinner. It may

be easier to serve a breakfast even from the pulpit but a varied diet will be more appreciated. Sometime after you are in the ministry look back into the barrel, and examine the texts, the topics, as well as the content of your sermons, and I think you will find that they might have been rich in vitamins, but that perhaps G or B 2 was neglected.

But a timely sermon is not merely a nice, interesting, beautiful homily. It must have some conviction in it. We need not shout to be convincing; the day is past when our congregations believe we are convinced because of our shouting. Perhaps the opposite is more often true, that we shout the loudest when we are not sure that we have been convincing. We usually adopt the conversational tone today. Think of the men you consider great preachers and you will mention men who have been convincing because you thought them convinced. In a sense they were not men who had a great message, but in some instances it seemed that the message had the man. Unless we are thoroughly convinced, we can hardly be convincing. Therefore, it is well to speak of only such facts about which we have positive and definite opinions and convictions. Spurgeon once asked a young man who was considering entering the ministry, "Are you on fire?" "Can you preach?" He answered, "Well I won't set the Thames on fire." Spurgeon asked, "Well, if I threw you in would it fizz?" That's still a good question.

Until recently I wondered what the urgency for preaching was. I knew what the urgency formerly was. Paul for instance thought that Christ would return, and, for a while at least, he thought he would return during his life-time. I admit, I couldn't quite understand why his second coming was to be so entirely different from his first; for his first coming showed the Love of God, and the second was to show his righteousness, judgment and power. But I could understand why Paul felt an urgency to preach. Many preachers of old had much the same urgency: to save men from the wrath to come. But my theology never gave me that urgency, and I am frank to admit I often wondered just what it was. For a while I thought that the urgency for timely preaching was the hope of a better world, even though I did not believe in the continuing theory of progress. Our day presents

us with an urgency, namely, the need of the world. The world is lost. "It is a sad world, a mad world and a bad world," no doubt of that. We declare to a baffled and needy world that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not only the greatest need in a divided world, but the only unifying influence in a disunited world and the greatest hope for a lost world. Our urgency today is as powerful as Schweitzer's apocalypticism or Paul's eschatology. Timely preaching will issue forth from a deep seated conviction and faith. Such preaching would be prophetic; it would speak of fundamental matters that change men and the world and would not only speak of the glories of peace, but the wages of sin.

So much of modern preaching has strengthened man's prejudices. For example, few would argue against the statement that Protestantism has nurtured and encouraged the capitalistic system. George Santayana has said: "The adaptable spirit of Protestantism may be relied upon to lend a pious and philosophical sanction to any instinct that may deeply move the national mind." So much of modern so-called timely preaching has been an attempt to tune down the message and keep people comfortable, instead of using the Gospel as a corrective for the sins of a people grown comfortable in its personal and social sins. Any of us who have received any periodicals from Germany will remember that for instance in a sermon addressed to the Deaconesses in their annual meetings at an institution of Charity the preacher likens Hitler to Moses of old. He too was to save his people from economic slavery and lead them into lands which they had formerly occupied, and which God had promised to the Fathers, yea, a land that would have milk and honey. We are not surprised to read that Walter Lippman now is a friend of the church, for the church can help to strengthen and almost guarantee democracy. The church is the means for the end of Democracy. We can't forget that preachers have justified slavery and are already quite adept in the art of justifying hatred and propaganda. They can even justify bingo and gambling as long as these are done in the church, for in most states they are not permitted except in a religious institution. It's a sad commentary that the saloon must abide by a higher standard than the church. One sometimes despairs when one thinks of the nice, sweet homi-

lies which pass for preaching and which, by the way, congregations seem to enjoy hearing. We are accountable for our preaching, but not to popular opinion primarily.

Does the pulpit have to become partisan to be timely? It is my opinion that the church should present a standard which is above partisanship. It is the critic of all. Labor and Capital must stand before the bar of justice enunciated in the ethic of Jesus. The Church, usually, may be found on the side of an even relative justice. A preacher can usually be more prophetic if he is on the side of the weaker, but it's much more convenient and much easier to be on the side of the strong.

How readily the church compromises is seen in a few other recent occurrences. An Ambassador of Peace blesses the aeroplanes as they leave to capture, no, as they leave to steal, from a weak people the land of Ethiopia. The League of Nations not only stands helpless when appealed to by Haile Selassie, but endeavors to rationalize its weakness and find justifiable reasons for Italy's dastardly act. "If salt has lost its savor, it is thenceforth good for nothing."

Dr. Leinbach, the exceptionally capable Editor of our "Messenger," recently had an editorial which spoke of some church that advertised, "The Service at Christ Church will make you feel uncomfortable." That should be true of every worship and preaching service. But that takes much more than an attitude of "I love my people." It requires a realism that sees deeply enough to recognize the deepest needs of men. And let us remind ourselves that men do not desert the church because of some stern truth that makes them uncomfortable, but rather because of the "sweet nothings that bore them to death."

To be timely, *you* must be preaching the sermon. I am not referring to plagiarism as such. Perhaps a suggestion may not be out of place. Dr. Brown makes the suggestion. We all wish to read the sermons of great preachers. Sometimes it's very difficult not to plagiarize. There are certain men who appeal to us so much that when we read one of their sermons it is difficult not to use their idea and call it our own. When you are preparing a sermon on a certain text or topic, write down some of your ideas before you read. If possible, make a rough outline and then read.

Read as much as you can, and you will find that your opinions are being strengthened, but you will have the satisfaction to know they were your own. There is also a satisfaction to know that Fosdick, Tittle, Buttrick or Stanley Jones seem to have used your ideas. But I now would refer to another form of plagiarism. I know a former assistant of Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr, who uses every movement that "Reinie" ever used. Just a few months ago one of our very fine clergymen moved from Cincinnati. I can remember when he arrived he was publicized as having worked under Fosdick. I heard him over the radio shortly after his arrival, and I wondered if the Vesper Hour had been changed to a different time. For the voice and careful enunciation were those of Dr. Fosdick. "The Voice was Jacob's voice, but the hands were Esau's hands." A friend of mine, who is now President of a Midwestern small college, could not preach without placing his hands either on the lapels of his coat, or on his hips, and I notice both of those places on his doctor's gown are badly worn. Why? He was a great admirer of Dean Brown. In olden days we referred to a man as having a "Kanzelton." Those individuals adopted an entirely different voice when they entered the pulpit. A good rule which the laymen would like to impress on our minds, and which by the way will save many embarrassments at the Sunday dinner table after you are married, is simply this: BE YOURSELF. That's not easy. We often try to be philosophers when we are not. We endeavor to prove we are experts in the field of social sciences and we are not. We endeavor to be great preachers sometimes and we are perhaps fair pastors. Be yourself and your people will learn to appreciate you for what you are, not for your imitations or your characterizations. Make your style better, but let it be your style. Make your English better, but let it be your English. Listen to the radio commentators and note that they speak distinctly, but use your voice. Have you ever noticed that almost all ministers have this one experience in common? When one is not in one's own pulpit the attendance is not what it should be. It matters little who you invite to take your pulpit, the attendance is abnormal. Some of the clergy get a great deal of pleasure from that experience and tell us how good they are. I hardly believe that's the reason.

The fact is, that the congregation does not come to church to hear a sermon, but comes to hear you preach the sermon, you whom they know, and care for in spite of your weaknesses. If that be true, and it is, why not be yourself in the pulpit?

I would like to add a few practical suggestions as I close. Any sermon should be well prepared. Some tell us that they have such a large church and have so many sick calls, social visits, funerals, weddings, speaking engagements and civic engagements that they have no time to prepare. Others who preach in the rural sections tell us they need not prepare for the group to whom they preach. The great preachers I know, without exceptions are busy men, and yet they find time, no, make time, for we never find it, for this most important task of a minister's busy week. Proper preparation does not guarantee a good sermon. But a good sermon is seldom extemporaneous.

Great books are needed as companions. One needs an attentive mind. One needs to lock out all visitors, callers and salesmen. How can you find time to read in the midst of a busy week? You can't. You just have to plan your work from the beginning accordingly. You must save some time for study, and not let too many emergencies arise to disturb that plan. Some simple rules are helpful. Get rid of your morning newspaper and mail as quickly as possible. Read the important letters and get rid of the advertisements. Don't waste your time, save it. Dr. Bundy thinks that every minister should read at least one good book every week. He would like to make that a requisite for the Methodist ministry. Few men read that much, and all of us should.

Your sweethearts would criticize me for another suggestion and I hope you will keep this from them. I have never read in a call issued to a minister that one of his primary tasks is to be the minister's wife's assistant. But some men seem to think that is their most important task. We are not to be mother's helpers, or become proficient in the culinary art. Please do not misunderstand. I am married. I try to be helpful, but I believe we should look at our work as highly and give as much or more time as men in other professions.

Dr. Moffat makes another suggestion that we should prepare our sermons well, and then prepare ourselves to preach them.



We are to speak out of our experience, out of our faith and conviction. That suggests self-commitment, surrender and dedication. For when we preach we are not the origin of a message, but rather a channel of a great message. Someone has stated it: "You are not required to give the best you have, but something you do not have at all."

Timely preaching will encourage counseling. The good preacher will find that people will come to his study and home to discuss with him the problems of their life. If preaching is timely and not remote it will encourage counseling. If it is unsympathetic and divorced from life, no notice in the bulletin calling attention to the hours arranged for counseling, can overcome the attitude that the preacher cannot possibly help them in their difficulty.

Timely preaching will glorify the message not the messenger. The church is not the saviour of the world, it is the channel of a Gospel concerning a savior of the world. Good preaching is therefore not so much a search for God, but a recognition of God's search for us. The church has no message itself, its chief task is to enunciate the good News of God.

Our sermon should be timely, but our greatest disappointment is that it has been too timely. That its effect, if any, doesn't last. I can't get the thrill and satisfaction from preaching that some men do. It doesn't satisfy me very much when I hear a very considerate and long suffering congregation compliment me on a sermon I have preached. When I finish preaching, I always think how the sermon might have affected their thinking and didn't, how it might have helped them face life and didn't. Here was a great opportunity again and I wasted their time, my time, and God's time when so much is involved. Somehow or other, if you are not ready to face that disappointment Sunday after Sunday of what might have been, I would suggest that you seek some other form of work, for preaching Christ crucified never is done successfully. As you begin to preach more regularly, I believe, you will agree with me and say with me: "I have never really preached a good sermon."

Cincinnati, Ohio.

## BOOK NOTICES

One of the significant trends of our times is the return to theology. Faced by a civilization that is bankrupt mentally and morally, and menaced by the rival ideologies of totalitarianism, we witness a rebirth of metaphysics in general, and of theology in particular—a new quest of the Absolute. Crises and catastrophes seem to belong to God's governance of the universe, and it is in such volcanic ages, when the universe seems vast and void, and when the hearts of men fail them from fear, that the Spirit of God moves them to search for light on life's meaning. They realize that our hopes and dreams are vain unless they are rooted and grounded in the very structure of the universe.

Accordingly, there is a depth in modern theology that fills one with high hope. What we hear today in the theological debate is not the dim echo of the petty issues of the post-reformation era. This is not the time for denominational polemics, to the plaudits of bigoted partisans. A sense of impending crisis broods over us, a foreboding that mankind stands on a divide of history and destiny, facing a future that is shrouded. The theological issues raised today are truly questions of life and death for mankind. The exigencies of these dark and difficult times compel theology to sound depths that were complacently ignored in "the good old times."

The Bulletin recommends the following volumes to its readers, confident that their study will be found rewarding.

*Christianity: An Inquiry Into Its Nature and Truth.* By Harris Franklin Rall. Charles Scribner's Sons. \$2.50.

This book received the award of \$15,000 from the Bross Foundation, in a competition that involved over 200 manuscripts from 31 states and 9 foreign countries. This high recognition raises high expectations. A perusal of the volume will confirm the judgment of the committee that made the generous award. It is a weighty book, without being ponderous. It is scholarly, but never pedantic. It defines Christianity as "the ongoing of that fellowship which had its origin with Jesus and seeks its continuous inspiration and guidance in him, finding through him the God

of its faith, the goal of its hope, and the way of life." In the discussion and defense of this thesis, the author traverses wide fields of thought and life. It will be found that in his presentation no cardinal doctrine of Christian theology and no crucial problem of religion has been ignored or slighted. As a searching survey of liberal Christian thought, imbued with profound spiritual insight and vibrant with ethical passion, Professor Rall's notable treatise is a timely and valuable contribution to the library of preachers and laymen whose faith rests on Christ's revelation of the purpose and power of the living God.

*The Gospel of the Kingdom*, by Frederick C. Grant. Macmillan Company. \$2.00.

*Is the Kingdom of God Realism?* By E. Stanley Jones. Abingdon Cokesbury Press. \$2.00.

These two books raise what may be called "the burning question" in contemporary theology. Since the rise of Karl Barth, the biblical concept of the Kingdom of God has been the focus of many critical studies, and the crux of a flood of controversial literature. The issue is very far from being settled, and readers will differ radically in their appraisal of these two volumes. They will be criticized as humanistic and moralistic perversions of the gospel by those who regard the Kingdom of God as a wholly eschatological, other-worldly conception. They will be welcomed by those who believe that the Kingdom of God is both a divine gift and a human task.

Professor Grant is a radical champion of a wholly "this-worldly" view of the Kingdom. The gospel of Jesus, he contends, was the proclamation of social redemption within history. E. Stanley Jones takes essentially the same position. The supreme fact of the universe, he holds, is the Kingdom of God, but its coming is neither automatic nor catastrophic. It demands surrender to God, and full commitment to the way of the cross.

Granting that both treatises need corrective emphases at critical points, no one can escape their practical implications. They are good reading for preachers and laymen. They strengthen our faith that there is help and healing in the gospel for the sin of the world.

THEO. F. H.