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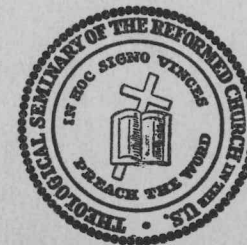
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

OF THE

REFORMED CHURCH IN THE

UNITED STATES

EVANGELICAL AND REFORMED CHURCH



LANCASTER, PENNSYLVANIA

1941

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BULLETIN

Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church in the United States

VOLUME XII

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SEMINARY NEWS ITEMS

The president of the Society of Inquiry, Mr. Schlicher of the Senior Class, has supplied the following account of the Society's work during the first semester of this academic year:

"An active season of the Society of Inquiry opened on September 17 when the students and faculty participated in the annual party to introduce newcomers. The varied program really got under way, however, on October 8 when Dr. Frantz presented a critical review of Grant's *The Gospel and the Kingdom*. In preparation for the annual Inter-seminary Conference the members were fortunate in having the President-emeritus, Dr. Richards, lead a discussion on the ecumenical movement and its relation to the present world condition. About the time of the local welfare campaign Mr. Francis Sharpless explained the work of the Welfare Federation of Lancaster. Prior to the Thanksgiving recess the activity of the Pennsylvania Council of Churches was presented by its capable secretary, Dr. William L. Mudge. Perhaps the most interesting meeting of the year was held on December 3 when Gert Schelansky, a refugee student from Berlin, was the guest. Professor Samuel Clark of Franklin and Marshall Academy where Mr. Schelansky is a student interviewed the speaker.

A picnic for students and faculty was held at Long's Park in the early fall. The annual Christmas party took place in the refectory on December 17.

A welcome innovation this year is *The Seminarian*, a chatty and informative paper published by the students bi-weekly. Also for the first time students are conducting services at a nearby C. C. C. camp every Sunday.

The Society sent four delegates to the Inter-seminary Confer-

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ence held at the New Brunswick Theological Seminary. Every effort is being made to know men from other seminaries and to work with them on tasks which concern all future ministers."

The editors of *The Seminarian*, referred to above, are Mr. Leibig and Mr. Snodgrass of the Senior Class and Mr. Wimer of the Middle Class. The paper has already established a firm place for itself in the life of the Seminary.

At the outset of the year the rapid movement of world events and the Selective Service legislation raised sharply the issue of the Christian's attitude toward war and peace. Several meetings, informally called but well attended by both students and faculty, were devoted to this subject. The positions which can be taken (and are being taken) by Christians were discussed frankly and in a fine spirit of mutual tolerance.

Toward the close of the semester a series of meetings was held for the purpose of deepening the devotional life of those in attendance. The meetings were under the leadership of Dr. Frantz.

There has been but one case of serious illness within the Seminary family during these months—namely, that of Mr. Haas of the Middle Class, who was stricken suddenly with appendicitis. An operation was performed, and he has now recovered completely.

—N. C. H.

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COMMUNION SERMON*

THEODORE F. HERMAN

Text: "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Romans 15: 13).

This meeting marks the beginning of the General Synod. In the week ahead the program of our united Church will engage our attention. But this morning we are met for worship, for communion with God in the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

My text, accordingly, is a prayer. It is Paul's prayer to the God of hope "that he will fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost." You will know that this prayer stands near the end of the Apostle's greatest epistle. In his letter to the Roman Christians Paul had expounded the Christian faith in the God and Father of Jesus Christ. He had made that triumphant faith the focal point of a philosophy of life that embraced God and man, time and eternity, heaven and earth, in the redemptive purpose and power of the sovereign God revealed by Jesus Christ.

Then, at the end of this Christian manifesto of faith, Paul wrote the text. It was his final benediction breathed upon the Christians at Rome. He prayed that "the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost."

Let that be our prayer this morning as we commune with God in preparing ourselves for the work before us and for the task of our Church in the years that lie ahead.

Now joy, peace, and hope are infinitely great and precious words in our human vocabulary. They denote spiritual treasures that are not the luxuries of the chosen few, but rather indispensable necessities for all mankind. Subtract them from your life and you rob it of health and strength. It becomes utterly bleak and barren. When joy fails, laughter dies; when peace is destroyed, hope perishes; when love is gone, we labor in vain.

* The Communion Sermon preached on Thursday, June 20, 1940, in the First Reformed Church, Lancaster, Pa., at the opening of the fourth meeting of the General Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church.

And in a world without joy and peace and hope, a world in which there is no laughter, no love, and no labor, men cannot live. But there has never been that kind of a world. This world is our Father's house, and as men fashion and furnish houses for those whom they love, so God has created a world in which men may find food for their bodies and sustenance for their souls.

So it is that we have all known something of joy and peace and hope. There is the joy and peace of working, of our daily labor, and we have tasted that. We have our places in the great workshop of the world, our several callings where we earn our living and support our families. There is joy and peace in honest labor, whatever its nature, whether in factory or on farm, in mill or mine, in studies or in stores. Paul knew that joy well for he was a maker of tents, and so do we. The most wretched and restless people on earth are the loafers and idlers, rich or poor, who know not the joy and peace of honest labor.

Again, we all know something of the joy and peace of human love, of loving and being loved. If we could but pluck hate out of our heart, the hate of men and nations, hate with all its ugly brood of vipers, how our life would flow like a deep river that sings as it flows and quickens every shore it touches. To the full measure of our love we know joy and peace in heart and home and friendship. This joy and peace, too, Paul knew, whose genius for friendship and whose tender love irradiate his every letter.

Again, as students and teachers, members of one of the learned professions, so called, we know something at least of the joy and peace of the pursuit of knowledge, which is the by-product of a studious life in the goodly company of the elect who have widened the boundaries of the kingdom of the mind. There are times, says Emerson, when mankind, plodding along on its beaten path, turns a corner and runs headlong into an inspiring ideal, like democracy, that points to far horizons and to distant goals, or to an idea that sheds new light on the mystery of life. Something of that joy and peace we also have known—days when some great book made our hearts burn within us, some quiet hour of study and meditation in the presence of Him who is the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

These are some of the precious and familiar sources of joy and peace and hope that we have known and for which we thank God. But something has happened to them in these latter days. Somehow, even to us in this sheltered land, they now seem like cisterns of man's digging whose water no longer quenches our thirst. How utterly inconsequential and meaningless our labor seems in these fateful and volcanic days. Be it the blessed drudgery of our humble daily lives or the stupendous Maginot lines, the impregnable bulwarks wrought by man, or our dreams and schemes of universal love, of a brotherhood world—how feeble they seem today, how impotent to stem the rising and rushing tide of hate, how helpless to lift the burden of woe that crushes untold multitudes of men.

If that be true of us in the sheltered haven of our land, if even we know hours when our hearts fail us as we gaze with stricken eyes into the hideous present and into a future shrouded in darkness, what shall we say of the lands made desolate by the fury and folly of war? What about the homeless and hungry multitudes uprooted and exiled, whose helpless suffering staggers our imagination? What joy of honest work is there for them, what peace of home and heart, what hope for the morrow?

In such a world to meditate on joy and peace and hope in a land of comparative peace and plenty seems like an escape from reality, like a betrayal of humanity. Is that the best the Church of Christ can do for the nations whose desperate plea for help is carried to our shores? Is our answer to their plea the prayer that "the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing?" Their prayer is for money and munitions, for men perhaps, so that the generations yet unborn may again live and labor and love in joy and peace and hope.

But it was in a world much like ours that Paul breathed the benediction of our text upon the Christians at Rome, many of whom were destined to become living torches for a Roman holiday in Nero's pleasure garden. Then, as now, right was on the scaffold and might was on the throne. Then, as now, a great civilization was weighed in God's balances and found wanting—the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome. Then, as now, rival ideologies clashed for supremacy and the future of

mankind was unknown and uncertain. It was in such a world, disheartened and disintegrating, that Paul exclaimed, "The night is far spent and the day is at hand." He saw the night of sin, its stark reality and menace, but it was spent, even far spent. He saw the dawning of a day, of God's day in God's own time, when His omnipotent love would conquer hate and redeem mankind from sin and sorrow.

It was in a world much like ours today, marred and maimed by the fury and folly of man, that Paul prayed to the God of hope that he would fill the Roman Christians "with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost." My brethren, the headlines of today's morning paper also spoke of joy and peace and hope: the joy that rocked Berlin when France asked for an armistice, the peace dictated by Hitler, the hope of having dealt the death-blow to the tottering democracies in Europe.

But the Apostle's is a joy and peace that have other foundations than guns and tanks and bombs, for a hope that is filled with gladness for all the world, the hope of the triumph of God's Kingdom. He prays to the God of hope for the joy and peace in believing, not in money and machines, in men and munitions, but in God the Father Almighty, Maker and Ruler of Heaven and Earth; for faith that this sovereign God determines the destiny of men and nations; for the joy and peace and hope that only He can give us whose is the power and the glory forever and ever.

We do well, then, to make that prayer of Paul our own today, his prayer to the God of all hope. In a day when ruthless dictators usurp His power and prestige, strewing the earth with blood and tears, that eternal God is our only refuge. Paul knew a joy that no sorrow, no suffering, could quench. He knew a peace that could not be broken by the tempests that lashed and shattered the surface of his life with their fury—the peace of God that passes our knowledge and understanding. He knew a hope, a deathless hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit, that made him unafraid. That joy and peace and hope we pray God may grant us, for the help and healing of mankind as we face our task in these days of catastrophe. And when we approach the altar this morning to commune with God with that prayer in our

hearts, let us add to it in humble contrition the penitent confession of our sins and shortcomings. We, too, the Church in all lands, have helped in some measure to bring upon mankind the judgment of God. We, too, share the responsibility with tyrants and dictators for the pentecost of calamity that is overwhelming the world with disaster. We have sought joy and peace and hope in the human cisterns that now utterly fail us. A divided Church has proclaimed a diluted gospel. A denominationalism as blind and bigoted and bitter, as intolerant and competitive, as nationalism, has not been loyal to the Christ, its Lord and Master. In days of peace and prosperity that divided and competitive Church talked vaingloriously of bringing this world to Christ in one generation. In the Great War it furled the banner of Christ and followed the flag. Today it confronts a world in which within Christendom, so called, there has been a revival of paganism and a reversion to the jungle.

But disillusioned, humbled, and chastened, the Church of Christ faces a disintegrating world on her knees, in penitence and contrition, praying that God will grant us grace that in this catastrophe we may be loyal to the gospel of Christ, whatever the cost, praying that we may be able to drink the cup of Christ, even His Cross, if we would bear witness to the love that redeemed us and that is the only remedy for the sin of the world.

It may well be that today, as citizens of America, we must again mobilize our material resources and even our human forces to the last man and to the last dollar in order to prevent the triumph of forces that menace the things that are more precious than life. May God forbid it. But woe unto America and woe unto this bruised and bleeding world if that be all that the Church of Christ will do! The pagan secularism that threatens to destroy us cannot defeat by the carnal weapons of men. We defeated the Kaiser and his legions, but Kaiserism and militarism lived on and flourished. Even so we may defeat Hitler without conquering the spirit that animates him and all his followers everywhere. To exorcise that evil spirit from the body of mankind requires weapons other than those men can forge or money buy. It calls for our spiritual rearmament.

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Of one thing we may be sure. No halfhearted compromise Christianity will stem the tide of secularism that threatens to engulf the world. From every side there is thrust upon the Church of Christ the solemn, urgent need of a faith girded with the power of God's spirit to bear witness to Jesus Christ in word and deed, even unto death. Let us commune with God this morning with the prayer in our heart that He will gird us with that power and guide us in our labor. It may be that in His infinite love and mercy God will use His Church that out of the bitter seed-time of these dark days there may come a harvest of all joy and peace and hope in believing—a world that shall be a little closer to God's Kingdom.

The Theological Seminary,
Lancaster, Pa.

REFORMED CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES

THE WORK OF GOD OR SERVING TABLES?*

"It is not fit that we should forsake the work of God and serve tables."

Acts 6: 2.

CHARLES D. ROCKEL

Among a great many church members it is still a mooted question whether a minister should regard the whole community to be as much his parish as the congregation which he has been called to serve. There can be little doubt concerning his responsibility to the congregation which calls him and pays his salary but no minister can altogether escape the claims made upon him by the modern community. His calling as a minister of the Gospel does not exonerate him from the duties of citizenship. Yet it is very easy under the lure and pressure of community appeals to forget the priority claim which a congregation has upon the man whom it has called to be its pastor. There is a real danger that a socially minded minister may become so involved in community work that he minimizes the intimate personal services of a faithful shepherd of his flock. To do so is to forsake the work of God to serve tables which is an exceedingly poor bargain to make.

True, the minister is called to serve human need wherever he may find it and he cannot excuse himself for any failure to give of his best in such cases but he cannot forego the necessity to give careful thought to how and where he can best serve the human needs that seem to press upon him with such insistence. To secure lasting results and to avoid needless mistakes requires the use of intelligence quite as much as the willingness to render service. A large number of ministers fritter away their time and energy on worthless trivialities while the enduring things of the Kingdom often receive nothing better than the frayed and tattered remnants of their talents because they are unable to resist any appeal that comes to them. Little wonder that they should sooner or later be overwhelmed by a sense of futility and settle down to the safe time-serving manipulation of ecclesiastical machinery because they are torn by frustration and have become bitter in spirit. A minister is not faithful to his great

* The second of two lectures on the Charles S. McCauley Foundation delivered in Santee Chapel, January 30, 1940, by the Reverend Charles D. Rockel.

commission to preach the unsearchable riches of the Gospel of God's redeeming grace just because he can boast that he answers every appeal that comes to him and at the close of the day finds himself exhausted physically, mentally and spiritually.

After all a minister is called to a specific ministry in sacred and spiritual things and while it is by no means always easy to tell how far his services may legitimately extend beyond the confines of his own immediate parish it must be evident that some limit is intended in the nature of his call to the Christian ministry. It is well therefore for every minister with a penchant for work outside of his congregation to be on his guard lest he find himself far afield, log-jammed and impotent in the field where he should be most effective. Any minister who fails to keep his congregation behind him as a reliable foundation from which to work will soon find himself in serious difficulty. No minister can long render acceptable service to the community if he finds himself the pastor of a hostile and protesting congregation. Many things in a community may be very much worthwhile doing by some one but the wise minister will ask himself whether he is necessarily the person to do them. Some of these good things can very easily crowd out the best things and a minister is wasting his time and energy if he permits a community to shunt him off into giving himself to these minor activities.

Modern high pressure advertising technique and clever ballyhoo deceive even the elect and often lead a minister into believing that he is struggling to push the last obstacle out of the path of the advancing Kingdom of God when in truth he is merely helping a few social climbers nail one more rung to the ladder of their social ambition. Or he may come to imagine that by giving unstinted service to some civic organization he is planting the Gospel of Christian righteousness into the very life of his community only to find out later that he was simply helping one group of business men to steal the publicity march on another. It is not cynicism but an objective facing of facts to point out these conditions. With the purest of motives and the finest intentions a minister will find himself the victim of unscrupulous manipulation. He may be as wise as a serpent when he takes part in community work but he will find it exceedingly difficult always to

be as harmless as a dove. This by no means is to say that fear of making mistakes should drive every minister to strictly limit his activity to his congregation nor should it lead him to the contempt of cynicism. Far, from it! But it is pointing out by way of caution a real danger that always besets the wider ministry of all sincere and socially minded ministers.

I am fully aware of the real danger that lurks in the division of the world and life into secular and sacred spheres with hard and fast lines separating the two. Personally I am all for considering the whole universe as a unity. I applaud as sacred every effort of man to achieve noble ends in life, whether in the market place or in the pulpit of some Gothic cathedral, but unfortunately in actual life the sacred is lost in the welter of the secular struggle to wrest a living from our industrial and economic order. There is a deep underlying distinction in the universe which men have tried to designate by the secular and the sacred. These designations correspond to some real distinction and whether we will or no, in life we must deal with this dualism in a practical way even tho in theory we deny the distinctions. It has been the experience of Protestantism that to attempt to make everything sacred is to end up by holding everything secular. Totalitarianism is the horrible result of our attempt to regard everything in the universe as sacred so that demonic powers have now taken on the appearance of divinity and claim that they alone are sacred. Thus has ended the effort of humanism to hold as sacred that which is truly secular. It is well to hold to the distinction between the sacred and the secular when a minister gives himself to community service because it is a valid and safeguarding distinction.

Man must continue to build his sanctuaries to the glory of God and hold them sacred to the worship of that which is holy, sacred and divine. Man is creature and child of God at the same time and for this reason he finds the physical warring against the spiritual. This dual nature of man finds expression in his secular and sacred interests and unless he draws a clear line of demarcation between them he finds that the secular swallows up the sacred. So he must continue to hold the sanctuaries more sacred than his office, his factory or even his home and he needs often to

retreat to their holy solitude to bathe himself in a glory that is not of this world lest he lose the sense of that which is spiritual. Community service may have such a powerful appeal that a minister may easily be led to give up the distinction between the secular and the sacred but he always does so at great loss to himself and with real danger to the community.

A minister is called to a holy ministry and to throw himself unguardedly into community service may easily lead him to lose the sense of the sacred. He may discover, when it is too late, that in the din and confusion of serving tables he has lost a sense of reverence in the presence of that which is holy because the clash of civic affairs has drowned out the still small voice of God. It is by no means easy to hold to appreciation of that which is sacred amidst the clashes of community jealousies or to remain reverent in the midst of the bickerings of rival factions. It is a difficult undertaking to attempt to carry the ministry of sacred things into the many conflicting issues and rival contentions of community service.

You may therefore contend, and I will readily grant the truth of your contention, that for this very reason a standard of spiritual values should be set up and maintained in community activity. But the sacred principles of the Christian Gospel will not find ready acceptance by the leaders of the community just because a Christian minister advocates them while he is acting as the chairman in a Community Chest drive. A hope that such principles will receive more ready acceptance if advocated by a minister becomes a snare and a delusion to an unsuspecting crusader entering upon community service. To him it seems inescapable that the spiritual standards of Christian ethics should be applied to all social welfare efforts. Just as surely do many prominent business men believe that such ethics are hopelessly impractical in the real world of social and economic competition. To insist then upon the application of Christian ethics will precipitate contention and even strife that will involve the minister in publicity which congregations do not admire. Not only does such a stand involve unwelcome publicity but it actually endangers the success of the very movements in which the minister

is most interested. Thus the risks which every minister inevitably encounters when he enters into community work are increased and make clear the wisdom of weighing these risks before launching out into activities that will bring many unsuspected aspects to the attention of both the minister and his congregation.

Modern business men who boast of being hard headed practical leaders of affairs insist upon success at any cost and feel uncomfortable in the presence of Christian idealism because they realize how impossible it is to achieve its aims under present business methods and they do not readily take to the idea that all community enterprises should be inspired and guided by purely Christian motives and principles. They are often smitten with a guilty conscience and do not like to face the wide gap between the reality of our present competitive economic system and the ideals of the Kingdom of God but they candidly can see no way in which to change the present situation. Then too they want results and want them quickly with as little expense as possible so that they become quite impatient with any one who seems to them to quibble about purely academic questions. They are not bad men and often lament the low standards of business ethics but they are usually busy men. They simply are the victims of a vicious system with a rather narrow conception of what may reasonably be considered practical. Their idea of the practical is conditioned by the competitive system of which they are both the victims and the undisputed beneficiaries. They are very prone to consider a minister dangerously radical if he tries to carry out the ideals of the Kingdom of God in community affairs. The more is the pity because they are otherwise often very estimable men, but our whole world of business enterprise is saturated with a pagan ethic and community service is all too often imbued with a humanistic materialism that condemns Christian ideals as hopelessly "other worldly" and leaves a conscientious minister engaged in community work bruised and bleeding spiritually after a fray with such a situation. The weakness that has thus far defeated the whole program of social service, which was entered upon so hopefully about two generations ago, is the humanistic materialism which has been the philosophy of so many of the leading social workers. A change for the better is slowly

coming to the surface as social service workers themselves are beginning to realize that no social program can go very far unless it is based upon a thoroughly sound spiritual foundation. Hence we now find a section of conferences on social work devoted to the religious consideration of these problems and more and more is the contribution which the church can make coming to be recognized.

Far too many civic leaders are in sympathy with the ideas reported of an elder in the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York. It seems that Dr. Jowett toward the close of his ministry in the United States introduced a mildly social note into his preaching. One Sunday morning he gave unusual emphasis to the social note. At the close of the service, a visitor from a western city remarked to a man who happened to be an elder, "Wasn't that a powerful sermon Dr. Jowett preached this morning?" "Yes, indeed, you know we have a great man of God in our pulpit" replied this prominent elder. Then the visitor innocently asked, "But do you business men in New York intend to practice that sermon in you business dealings tomorrow morning?" At this the good elder threw up his hands and murmured, "Lord, no, that would ruin business."

Just so! The same spirit prevails on Main Street in every hamlet and city of our nation and the minister who longs to join in community work must seriously reckon with it. To attempt to apply Christian ideals, much as they are needed, to community work is to invite misunderstanding and often malicious and deliberate misrepresentation. Let there be no mistake on this point. It is no less radical today than it was in the days of Jesus to insist upon the application of principles of goodwill, love and brotherhood to community affairs.

The desire to be of service may easily lead a minister to permit a community to make a glorified errand boy out of him. Several years ago a minister became a standing joke in one of our cities because every time any one wanted to take a baby to the doctor or save the expense of a taxi fare this minister was pressed into service. He not only belittled his ministry but he cheapened the church as well. The result of his misadventures drove him from the city in disgust. He was unable to distinguish between serving the Lord and running errands.

The instinct that led Paul and the early Apostles to refuse to serve tables because they were called to a higher spiritual service was sound and the modern minister neglects to follow their example at great peril not only to his peace of mind but also to his usefulness as a Christian minister. They may have carried to an extreme their refusal to engage in work outside of what they conceived to be the work of God but that does not invalidate the soundness of their contention. There is a subtle and sometimes a deadly fascination in serving tables because it can be easily publicized but it may in the end defeat the noblest purpose of a minister if not carefully curbed. The difficulty is increased by the fact that it is not easy to see where the work of God turns into serving tables and for that reason the minister must use special caution in all of his civic undertakings.

The interesting personal contacts made in community work and the delightful experiences it opens are among the richest and most rewarding that come into the life of any minister but they also make exhausting demands upon time, patience and strength. There is nothing more trying in the life of a busy pastor than attempting to deal sympathetically and yet wisely with folks who are torn by inner conflicts or driven almost to the breaking point by an appalling sense of insecurity and then demanding impossible considerations. The mental strain resulting from economic insecurity under which multitudes of people live today has greatly increased the number of non-church people who seek out some sympathetic listener to whom they can pour out their grievances, real or imagined, against society. The minister often becomes the target for their resentment against society and comes to experience at first hand "man's inhumanity to man." Because they are not members of any church he may be impatient with them since their demands are often unreasonable and they seem to have no claim upon him. Any minister who enters community work of any kind invites whole armies of these bitter and resentful people to his door, and if he is the right kind of a minister, to his heart as well. To listen to their pathetic tales—some times true and sometimes merely tricks of mendicancy—or to witness the agony of spirit that often accompanies these confessions and then to attempt to deal with their insistent but often unreasonable

demands for assistance is to face an ordeal that leaves one spiritually frayed and tattered. Every minister who gives his life to the larger service of the community invites such ordeals because he soon becomes known as one who can sympathize with and help the unfortunate people whom our modern competitive society disinherits. To become known as the friend of the poor is not always a blessing but it is a glorious opportunity to proclaim the Master who invited his followers to serve him by ministering to the least of his brethren. The wider a minister becomes known for his unselfish service and the more he gives himself in sympathetic ministrations the more insistent become the claims of those who seek him to help them in their personal problems and these personal interviews are prodigal squanderers of time and strength.

Aside from such trying demands upon his time and energy the minister engaged in community work will often find himself so rushed making speeches, attending meetings or heading committees that he does not have the peace of mind necessary for the meditation and spiritual culture that must go into the foundations of a successful ministry in spiritual things. Our age of activism looks with disdain upon seclusion and contemplation as retreats for the weak and insufficient but the quickest way for a minister to destroy his spiritual leadership is to neglect the important discipline of the spiritual life. Many a book that required hard study and deep thinking is on my library shelf now because I felt the need of having some effective pull away from over activity to the quiet thought which a hard book demands in its reading.

One of the serious mistakes which young pastors make—and some of us older and more experienced ones as well—is to imagine that we must safe-guard our popularity by accepting every invitation to make a speech or take part in community service. It is little wonder that intelligent people have ceased to take seriously what a great many ministers say or smile at the pretensions of the church. Why should any one take seriously what preachers say when specialists hesitate to commit themselves on subjects that do not give the least concern to some reckless preacher. Yet under the temptation of pleasing everybody,

ministers will dogmatically declare as fact what no specialist would accept as anything more than an interesting or plausible hypothesis. It does not excuse a minister to plead that he is asked to speak on all kinds of subjects. He should know his specialty and work at that in season and out of season but he should likewise know his limitations and not wander outside of them. It would greatly benefit the Church if every minister would record a sacred vow in heaven never to speak on any subject that is not directly related to religion. That would at least limit him to the field in which he has every right to be accepted as a specialist and be heeded as one who speaks with authority.

I hesitate to make even a single exception to this rule for fear of opening the door too far although one should be made in the case where some interest has led one to make a special study of a particular subject. In such a case the minister has a right to speak by virtue of the hard study and careful thought he has put on the subject but the wise minister will continue to sternly limit his subjects to those which the community has a right to expect him to handle with authority, as a religious leader.

The layman often labors under the illusion that ordination bestows omniscience upon the minister who may encourage this illusion by his willingness to speak on any subject. Of course such an exhibition of faith in the minister's omniscience flatters human vanity but it is dangerous to play with it because in the end it must jeopardise his influence. No one man can possibly be an authority on all subjects and it is a good thing for ministers to confess that openly and often. Ministers all too readily fall victims to this illusion because they are afraid of offending somebody by refusing kind and well meant but entirely misleading invitations to give an address. Clothed in the graciousness of some good friend and radiant with the appeal of some great cause they are often almost irresistible especially when they are joined with the temptation to appear adequate for every situation. That is a combination that is hard to resist but fallible and finite beings, even though they be ordained ministers, had better not flirt with omnipotent omniscience.

Not the least of the dangers that confront a minister who engages in community work is the alluring temptation to substi-

tute much activity for a deep searching of soul and solid mental discipline because it creates the illusion of accomplishment. Preparing the good seed of a sermon through mental travail and spiritual discipline through long morning hours, unbroken by any excitement more startling than the message of prophet and seer that has come down through the ages, often appears quite tame and barren of results compared with the very substantial looking stone walls of a community center which your efforts have helped to raise. Yet there is reliable ground for the suspicion of the European churches concerning the activism of American Christendom. Not all activity in which American ministers participate could be commended by Christ and certainly it does not always advance the Kingdom of God. A minister may gain a moment of popularity by officiating at a mass marriage conducted at some county fair but he leaves behind a stench in the nostrils of all decent people. Of course those "who say and do not" should be condemned but the minister must not imagine that just because he is busy with many things he is therefore doing the will of God. The enduring good which he accomplishes must flow out of a life activated by the motives that inspired every word and deed of Christ. The minister of Christ is to live in society as one who serves but he will discover that to do so he must first be Christlike in spirit or he will make of none effect his best intentions. He must also learn to concentrate on those disciplines that will deepen his own spiritual life. He will then be able to lead the community to a higher plane of spiritual living.

Community activity imposes devastating interruptions which rob a minister of the privacy which he needs for his best preparation and which he can only win with the firmest determination. Between the insistent call of the door bell and the jangle of the telephone, his study will be seriously disturbed. A multiplicity of interests outside of a congregation inevitably draw the enterprising pastor into these interruptions. If he is to be at his best in the pulpit he should keep a period free for serious study each day. Even Jesus left the shepherdless multitudes in their desperate need and retired to the quiet loneliness of the desert so that he might replenish the exhausted inner reservoirs of his soul that had been drained by the spiritual demands of the multitude.

The mere friction occasioned when personality meets personality in the serious fellowship of need saps the spiritual energy of the sincere pastor and brings on a crushing weariness of soul. To have people press hard upon your sympathies with their dire need and their careless sins and to have others try you with their patent dishonesties is to pass through a fiery furnace that tests your spiritual mettle as few other experiences can. To endure the insults of the ignorant, to withstand the arrogance of the overbearing with graciousness, to struggle on under the malicious misrepresentations of the evil minded and the jealous requires resources of mind and soul that cannot be found in the busy round of serving tables. This minister must have time and quiet to brood over the issues of life and to take a new grip upon himself if he is not to be completely crushed by the bitter disappointments that overtake him who sincerely gives himself to the wider ministry of social service.

The demands and the interruptions which such service brings with it make a daily retreat for spiritual renewal a difficult attainment and yet it is indispensable to a healing and helpful service. Years of effort will hardly educate a whole community to leave time free from interruptions for this purpose. The people who are in need are many while the minister is only one but all their needs and calls converge on his single interest. Spiritually and physically weary, the faithful pastor can find no escape from the insistent demands of needy folks and the persistent ringing of the door and telephone bells, for they pursue him into the wee small hours of the night. When Dr. Wei of China visited me some time ago he said "the telephone is man's rudest invention. It even breaks in upon your prayers with its insistence." Indeed it does but only the weary minister who has given long and trying hours to the community can know how devastating its persistence can become to spiritual poise. If community activity is not to break the minister then at all costs he must make provision for a daily period of undisturbed spiritual discipline.

In these days of tensions and conflicts, when the cure of souls means so much more than it did in the Middle Ages or even than it did a few years ago, when life for multitudes is threatened by insecurity, when the fears that torment our world take their

costly toll in neurosis, the pastor must keep himself spiritually fit at all times if he is to help people carry these crushing loads. He has no excuse, not even if he is awarded a medal for outstanding service to the community, if he fails to fit himself spiritually to lead the people of his congregation and community into the ways of victorious living. This is his supreme task and no other service rendered to a community can ever become a substitute for it.

The satisfaction derived from busy activity should be put under suspicion and carefully scrutinized because it feeds in a most subtle and unsuspected way the vanity that lurks in human nature. It bolsters up the ego of the minister, who is so often regarded as an impractical idealist, to be considered as a practical man of affairs that he can hardly be expected to properly evaluate his own services. Besides, a sense of superiority is created by the numerous invitations that come to him to serve in some capacity of leadership. It will help him to deflate his vanity if he remembers that the real reason for all this public recognition is not superior ability at all but the fact that he gives his services without pay and accepts the flattering unction of the civic leaders in lieu of hard cash. Flattery is a most disarming weapon and is often used with deadly art by those who are seeking conscientious service but are not willing to pay for it. So it happens that men of the cloth grace all kinds of questionable occasions. No minister should thus permit the cheapening of his high calling.

Offering a stumbling prayer at some lonely bedside or preaching an average sermon to the same listless congregation may easily come to look like a pale and commonplace undertaking when compared to the thrill of basking in the lime light at the speakers table when the spell binders help the civic leaders bally-hoo their community over the top in the mobilization for human need. Besides, an overwhelming sense of failure, which would never be permitted in a Community Chest campaign, often overtakes the most conscientious effort at proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ's Gospel. This cannot be otherwise since the minister as preacher must deal with truths so glorious that a sense of failure must follow every human effort at their proclamation. Not so in community work where everything is

made to appear rosy and optimism oozes out of every effort. It is all too easy to accept these pep meetings for real accomplishments and there is an intoxication that goes with these meetings which creates a feeling of contentment and smugness. Painstaking study and faithful pastoral work often have less glamor than frenzied activity in civic and community affairs but the faithful oversight of the flock entrusted to his keeping and a conscientious preparation of the message he has to deliver still remain the primary task of the Christian minister.

No minister can take part in community service for any length of time or to any great extent without sooner or later finding himself involved in bitter and sometimes unprofitable controversies which may seriously divide his congregation and expose him to a dangerous flank attack. Any serious community controversy will divide the average congregation if its pastor becomes involved in it. Ambitious factions and unavoidable jealousies will lead to contention and misunderstanding in which any one in public life may become involved. Sometimes there is an honest difference of opinion that causes division but just as often there are ulterior motives at work in the struggle for power or advantage. The wisest man living cannot always escape the wounds that such controversies inflict but the minister is always in an unusually vulnerable position in them. He should carefully weigh all the possibilities of becoming embroiled in community quarrels that will embarrass him and jeopardise his position as a spiritual leader without accomplishing any lasting good. He must always guard against appearing as the champion of a clique or the partisan of some unchristian cause and that is by no means an easy task for anyone deeply engrossed in civic enterprises.

There are issues in which the minister should bare his breast in battle for his Lord and then take the consequences but he must always be able to choose the side on which he is to stand. He dare not permit himself to be maneuvered into a position where he fights the shadows of some cheap and utterly selfish feud. If it is a controversy involving principles in which the cause of Christ should be championed no honest man will stand aside for the sake of his own safety but in every community, controversies arise in which the minister should have no part because they are un-

worthy. A minister can well afford not to become involved in these but he will find it exceedingly difficult to avoid them if he has any large part in community work or is too closely identified personally with civic problems. A minister should never fear to be crucified for his Lord but he should be exceedingly wary of permitting himself to be crucified either by his own foibles or carelessness.

Subtle dangers lurk in the attractiveness of work in the community in that it tends to warp the judgment of values. Without being conscious of it the minister may be led to action that springs from hidden and ulterior motives. He is the last to recognize this fact and will often maintain most stubbornly that he is completely unselfish in everything that he does. That he does not intend to be dishonest or insincere does not alter the seriousness of his condition. In this day of spectacular appeals and deceptive advertising which poison the moral atmosphere and blunt the spiritual sensitivity of multitudes the minister will also feel their influence when he faces empty pews and a stationary or declining membership. He will then be inclined to take a lesson from modern methods and ethics. To have his name and picture appearing frequently in newspapers and to be mentioned as a prominent clergyman active in social welfare gives flattering publicity to himself and advertises his church in ways that seem attractive to many people. This on the surface may appear to be altogether to the good and there have been men who have had phenomenal success by the use of such methods but their success seldom outlived their residence in the community. We have all seen congregations flourish for a season under such ministers but they have all withered like Jonah's gourd under the succeeding pastor, who was usually blamed for the decline. A minister can easily gain publicity by some spectacular display of welfare work but it is a spurious fame and seldom benefits either the community, the church or himself. There have been some tragic falls for ministers who began with great promise but who could not stand the heady wine of such publicity. Growing conceit undermines the balance of a goodly number of ministers and that always opens the door wide for disaster. A man must cultivate good taste and common sense to an extraordinary degree if he is not to deeply

regret the day he entered upon work in the community. A minister's activity in civic and community affairs by no means guarantees an increase in church membership even though the hook of his Gospel is heavily baited with the most alluring community service. To expect such results is to vitiate every effort at lasting service and is certain in the end to invite disappointment and disillusionment.

Enduring work usually has a less spectacular aspect since the crowds will not always listen to sound doctrine whereas the false prophets often secure an enormous following. It is almost axiomatic that real service to the community is unrecognized and certainly is never used for ulterior purposes either for advertising the minister or swelling his church membership. The slower and more difficult method of careful education and patient unobtrusive nurture of the spiritual life of a people produce far more enduring results than any cheap or selfish appeal to some spectacular civic or community undertaking. The danger does not lie in sincere, disinterested service but in the subtle and subconscious use that is sometimes made personally of such achievements.

No minister should completely isolate himself from the life of the community in which he lives and I would not for a moment suggest that he do so. He may and sometimes should take a large and influential part in civic affairs but there is no art which he should practice more assiduously than the gentle art of saying "no." A minister who finds himself with the unconquerable weakness of saying "yes" to every request soon becomes a sore trial to his congregation and a joke in the community. Any work in which a minister engages outside of his congregation should bear some relation to his calling as a minister of Jesus Christ. He can take it as a safe rule never to accept any civic or community responsibility if there are other able leaders available. If they are not at once available he should train some and retire as soon as possible. To engage in any community service simply for the sake of holding office or securing whatever publicity attaches to it are motives utterly unworthy of the Christian minister. It is always a good thing for a young minister to eschew community work as long as he can resist public pressure in order to prepare himself more adequately during the days of his ap-

prenticeship. Otherwise he may get an entirely erroneous conception of the value of such services and give them a meaning which they do not really possess. Ministers who "breeze" into a city or town are like a cyclone in that they usually pass out again leaving behind a train of personal and civic wreckage.

No minister can give himself to community service without serious consequences in his relation to his congregation unless he first wins the confidence of his people and teaches them to share his time with the community at large. Most congregations desire their minister to be popular but they want to decide the scope of that popularity. Many members fear that he will neglect his own congregation if he gives his time to interests outside of his parish. A leading pastor in one of our metropolitan churches is now in serious difficulties because he failed to give adequate consideration to this contradictory attitude on the part of congregations and became involved in controversies that led to accusations of radicalism. It requires a great deal of time to meet even the ordinary demands which the average community makes upon a minister and unless he has inexhaustible energy and a carefully devised system to guard his time and then follows a rigid program he will soon discover that he has landed in serious difficulties. Congregations will need a great deal more education than they have had in the past if they are to recognize their social responsibility and become willing to share their pastor in the larger service of the community.

A minister must learn to evaluate every appeal that comes to him in order that he may give whatever time he has at his disposal to those causes which have a legitimate claim upon him as a religious leader. Sometimes it will be necessary to be ruthless in his evaluation because one of the most difficult decisions that confronts any pastor is to learn how to steer between a soft sentimentalism that makes him the ready victim of every sharper and a hard boiled attitude that never feels the touch of human woe pulling on his heart strings. There is a golden mean but it is by no means easy to discern and then to follow it.

Let a minister be ever so sincere and let him honestly be crystal clear there are always those who will impugn his purest motives and feel called of God to expose his crookedness and to plot his

discomfiture. Those whom he must oppose will accuse him of being a scheming, grasping self-seeker. Besides a whole army of cheats are always ready to impose upon his good nature and bring ridicule upon his kindest efforts and reproach upon his calling. To avoid these pitfalls he must use wisdom and tact and practice a great deal of patient forbearance.

To enter sincerely and enthusiastically into community work drags the minister into many unsuspected and difficult tasks which otherwise he would certainly escape and it will often lead him into trying responsibilities that tax all his intelligence and patience. But that is often pure gain and he finds wisdom which no university could ever teach him. One such experience came to me from the fact that I was widely engaged in community service and became known by a great many underprivileged people.

One night, in the wee small hours of the morning, I was called to administer Communion to a dying woman who was not a member of my congregation. This service rendered I was leaving the public ward when I heard a voice feebly calling my name. In the dimly lighted ward I had difficulty in locating the bed from which the voice came. I went up to the bed when I had located it and found a woman seriously ill who introduced herself by saying she was not a member of any church but that she had gone to my church school when she was a little girl. Of course that was many years before I came and the woman was a complete stranger to me but she told me that some of her friends had told her that I was kind to poor people and helped them. She then told me that she had never been baptized and since she would not recover from her illness she wanted to be received into the church. Such a time and place is not the occasion for any theological arguments but I proceeded to ask her a few questions in order to prepare her mind for the reception of Communion for which she had asked. When I had baptized her I also confirmed her and gave her Communion. There was nothing that would lead me to deny this simple and sincere request. After a few words of encouragement I left her bedside.

The next afternoon an attorney of the city called me on the telephone and informed me that this woman who had been a

widow for only six months had called him to the hospital to make a will and designated me her executor and willed me her five orphaned children, the youngest of which was seventeen months old and the oldest eight years. I told the attorney that I could not undertake such an assignment and asked him to go back to the hospital and have the woman change her will appointing a Trust Company to execute it. He at once returned to the hospital but when he arrived the woman had gone into a coma and never regained consciousness. She died that evening and I found myself the father of five unexpected and unknown children as well as the executor of an estate of which I knew absolutely nothing. Needless to say I had nine strenuous but nine of the happiest months of my life, taking care of those children and making permanent disposition of them. It was the most unexpected experience but one that has had many delightful compensations. The children are now grown up and taking their place as valuable citizens of the city in which they were orphaned and willed to a totally unknown minister. A trying experience! Yes! but a telling tribute to the trustworthiness of the Christian minister engaging in social welfare work.

Any minister who undertakes such tasks must have a double portion of patience, an optimistic consecration that will accept no discouragement and a sympathy always held under careful control if he is not to wreck himself. But these are all qualities which it is well to develop. Under the stress of necessity he will discover talents that otherwise would remain dormant and unused in his personality. Such experiences are real blessings in disguise and fill life with a much needed zest. All such trying responsibilities could be avoided by confining himself to the more comfortable seclusion of his study but he would also miss many of life's richest compensations. Let no minister ever become so indifferent to the community around him that he has no desire to heed the call of need that comes from the great world beyond the confines of his immediate parish. Personality does not always mature most fully in the protection of the pastor's study and contact with life's problems at first hand gives him valuable insights into reality that would otherwise lie beyond his ken and which he could never glean even from the best of books. The

Gospel of redeeming grace will take on new meaning as he faces the conflicts of his community and feels the cruelty of man's inhumanity to man in his own soul.

To raise the question of what part the minister has in community service is to raise the whole question of the validity of the social implications of the Christian Gospel. A community cannot be divided into two clearly marked spheres one of which is the legitimate field for the minister's efforts while the other remains a field with the sign "No Trespassing" posted on it from which his sacred calling bars him because it is not expected that the principles of Christianity can function in it. We cannot go on forever dividing the world into pagan and Christian spheres of influence one of which is the rightful domain of the minister and the other from which he is barred, a forbidden field which he must not enter on pain of dire consequences. Nor can modern civilization continue to crucify the human spirit on the cross of the competitive struggle and ask the Christian minister not to feel any responsibility for changing such a system. Our world cannot much longer go on divided against itself. If the Gospel which Christ proclaimed is altogether other worldly and interested only in the narrow sphere of human life that centers in temple and sacred days this desperate world bleeding under the horror of war and agonizing under the dark dread of unemployment will soon learn how to get along without benefit of the clergy or the comforts of religion. If God is the "altogether other," far removed from the welter of human suffering and dying mankind, then he can do nothing about our world melting away in a universal disintegration and mankind will be doomed to atheism. The Gospel which the church proclaims and of which the Christian minister is the chosen herald must adequately meet the tragic plight of men and nations and help them to conquer the contradictions that torment our age or else it must give way to the zeal and drive of totalitarianism. The minister and the Church must help men to conquer their fears as well as give them power to overcome the world of chaos and confusion in which mankind is now floundering. Men and nations must be taught, as little children, to walk in the way of God and they can best be taught how to do that by the men of God who give themselves to serving

men without thought of self and by walking the glorious way of Christian hope and faith with them.

Ministers have been too prone to fall into the sin of saying beautiful things about the City of God and then doing little or nothing about it. Such a ministry will receive scant attention in the stirring days of social reconstruction and world upheaval through which our generation is passing and which will continue with increasing force for at least another generation. A minister with a clear vision of his task and taking full advantage of the opportunity for social work can render a glorious service to the Kingdom of God if he takes his legitimate part in community work.

Community service is based upon a real love and a deep concern for man and his physical, moral and spiritual welfare but it cannot be adequately motivated unless it rests upon a reverent and consecrated love for God. Without a consuming love for the Christ-like God and a deep sense of the infinite worth of the humblest individual all our efforts at social welfare will be nothing more than the humanism that is now perishing on the blood-stained battlefields of the world, nor is humanitarianism enough because it must always end in bitter disillusionment and the dark despair of futility. Community service is costly but when it is inspired by a Christ-like love for God and man, it becomes redemptive. It should find expression in the minister's personal faith and sacrifice. If there is to be any redeeming power in his efforts to serve his community then his motives must be centered in the divine inspiration that can be found only in living fellowship with Christ which will lead him to give himself in self-forgetting service. Otherwise every thing the minister does will simply be a show, a mockery and a snare. It is the minister's task as the ambassador of Christ to go before the people in a living example of consecrated service so that he may open the clogged spiritual channels of the community and send the saving grace of God flowing unobstructed, in redemption to all the people.

Royersford, Pa.

AN EVALUATION OF THE SPIRITUAL CONFERENCE*

THEODORE C. BROWN

In 1937 we observed the Golden Jubilee of the founding of the Spiritual Conference. To impress the Ministers and the Laymen with the importance of that occasion, the officers had their own names, as well as the names of the founders, printed in Golden Letters upon the front page, and if you turned the page to look at the program, you had to turn it upside down—a clever way of calling attention to the splendid anniversary program which they had arranged.

The Officers of the Conference for 1940 were so well pleased with the Anniversary celebration that they decided to celebrate the Golden Anniversary Session this year.

Following the custom of other Church Conferences which appoint a Committee on Findings, I have been asked to write a paper on the subject: "An Evaluation of the Spiritual Conference—What Benefits and Blessings has it Brought to Us and Our Church?"

However, I found myself at a disadvantage since I did not have access to any written documents. I had to depend upon oral tradition. It is true that I have been at times the companion of Paul—not Peter, but Paul has failed me—I have depended upon him to give appraisals of lectures at another institution which I could not understand. But the only editorial that I remember that might be an evaluation of the Spiritual Conference was entitled "Door Slammers." Those members of the Conference who have been disturbed by the "Door Slammers" have learned to cultivate a more sympathetic understanding of human nature and have themselves been blessed with a greater spirit of forgiveness.

The fact of the continued existence of the Spiritual Conferences for 50 years, with ever increasing interest, is sufficient evidence of its value to the ministers and laymen of our Church. The men who organized the Conference were deeply consecrated ministers of the Gospel and earnest seekers after the truth. They

* A paper read at the Spiritual Conference at Lancaster, Pa., July 31, 1940.

were conscious of the fact that having a diploma from a theological seminary is not enough to make any one an efficient minister of the Gospel.

It is not the function of the Seminary to fill the students with messages which they in turn transmit to the members of their parishes. The minister's message must be his own. He must have tidings to proclaim to the people who are in search for the meaning of life.

In II Samuel 18: 19-32, we read about a man who was a great marathon runner—Ahim-aaz said—"Let me now run, and bear the king tidings, how that the Lord hath avenged him of his enemies," Joab reminded him that he had no tidings—"Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou has no tidings ready." Another runner was sent with the news to King David but Ahim-aaz was also permitted to go and outran the Cushite and came to the king first—"And the king said, Is the young man Absalom safe?" And Ahim-aaz answered, "When Joab sent the king's servant, and me thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was."

The Minister is an interpreter of God and in order to bring a real message or tidings to a people in search for truth, he himself must be in constant touch with God, spending much time on the mountain top in prayer and meditation. He must not simply have ideas about God. He must know Him. There is a vast difference between knowing something about a person and then meeting that person and learning to know that person—what he is in himself.

A friend of the poet Tennyson said to him, "My dearest object in life, when at my best, is to leave the world, by however little, better than I found it: What is yours?" Tennyson answered: "My greatest wish is to have a clearer vision of God." The poet, it seems to me, had chosen the larger and better part.

To know God means more than to be aware of God. It would be a difficult matter to find an out and out intellectual Atheist. Most people are devoted to something outside themselves, greater than themselves, and that becomes their God. But to know the God whom Jesus revealed—The Father who is holy and righteous and who has a purpose of love for his children—to know him

requires taking thought. Truth is always the same but in the apprehending of the truth men differ.

The Professors in our Theological Seminary in my day, and I am certain the Professors of the present day, endeavored to create in the student the desire for the search of the truth.

It was an address by one of the Organizers of the Conference to the Students of the Theological Seminary that made a deep impression upon a certain young man, that after he entered the active ministry he would devote the morning hours to study. Dr. Weber said something like this, "The men of my Congregation pass my house to be at their place of employment by 7 A.M. Why should not I, employed in the service of My Lord and Master, be ready for work at 7 A.M.?" The Minister, in order to have a vital message, must keep in touch with great minds by reading books written by great souls.

The Spiritual Conference has been offering the opportunity to carry on the search for truth. Here we have met to study and to think together upon the great problems of religion—God, His Nature and Character—Man and His Relations to God—The Problem of Sin—Man's Need of a Saviour—The Problem of Suffering—International Relations—The Church—Preparation for Church Membership—Evangelism—Worship—The Message—The Life of Prayer in a World of Science and the Authority of Jesus.

In thinking together upon these great themes the members of the Conference have been guided, either consciously or unconsciously, by the slogan, "We agree to disagree; we resolve to love and unite in service." We have not met together in these Conferences to work for credits. However, in 1915 an Adjourned Meeting of the Alumni Association of the Theological Seminary was held for the consideration of a proposal to conduct a Summer School of Theology in connection with the Spiritual Conference. The proposal was not adopted.

The Rev. David A. Souders, D.D., one of the organizers of the Conference, was elected president and the Conference was saved from becoming a Summer School of Theology, and the majority of the writers of the papers have been ministers in the active pastorate—thus continuing the Purpose and Intention of the

Founders—i.e., to be a conference in fact, not merely in name. This has been a strong feature of the programs of the Conference—that we meet together as pastors to study and to think together upon the problems of the ministry. We gain more benefit from the subjects discussed by pastors, at least the writers of the papers do—than if these same subjects were presented by experts, steeped in philosophic thought and technical language beyond the understanding of us pastors.

Although this is not a Summer School of Theology, we do study and think together upon God, His Nature and Character, upon His relation to man and upon how we may come to clearer understanding of His Will and His loving purpose for man. In the words of William Adams Brown—"Theology, as Luther and his successors conceived it, is the systematic exposition of the gospel. It is the science that tries to express in simple and intelligible language the great convictions by which the soul lives. So far from being content simply to hand down what has been received from the past, it is its function to interpret the meaning of religion to the present, to give an answer, and, so far as it can, to justify its answer, to the ultimate questions of the soul: the question as to the meaning and the purpose of life, the questions as to the nature of God, and as to his relation to the soul of man, the question as to the destiny of the individual and of society, and the way in which that destiny may best be realized."¹

Even though we do not come here to work for credits, nevertheless we do seek self improvement—self-improvement in order that we may become more efficient interpreters of the God whom Jesus revealed.

Jesus' rebuke of Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offense to me," because your thoughts are not God's thoughts, but men's (Matt. 16: 23)—is a challenge to this age in which God has been ruled out of the lives of so many people and in which nations have reverted to paganism in their dealings with one another.

Quoting Muriel Lester in part—"Evidently Christ is disappointed with us if we are content with merely thinking like men. Something more is expected of us than to jog along in the ordi-

¹ *Modern Theology and the Preaching of the Gospel*, pp. 6, 7.

nary way, 'Behaving like decent fellows.' We are supposed to think like God.

"To fulfill this great destiny it is necessary for us to preserve the open mind, open to truth from whatever angle it comes, for truth is God. We must never allow ourselves to get into a rut, for all ruts are bad—even good ones. We must not do good out of mere habit; we must not pray by rote; we must keep ourselves sensitive to every breath of the spirit, to inspiration from whatever quarter it comes. . . .

"To learn to think like God means to ignore barriers of class, race, and nation; it means the dropping of all labels. The spirit of discernment is the mark of the man of God. It cannot be commanded. It falls upon those who are willing to be the servants of humanity, who are humble in spirit, who are expectant."²

The Spiritual Conference has been helpful in our thinking upon God and upon man. It has fostered a liberal spirit. Liberalism has come in for much criticism in recent years—and a certain kind of liberalism is deserving of criticism—that liberalism which endeavors to save the world or bring in a new social order without God, and without using God's methods and means. A liberalism that is so engrossed with man that it forgets God, is dead and should be buried.

There is a liberalism that is not dead. For true liberalism is not insensitive to God. It has a deep faith in the living God. Faith in the God whom Jesus revealed. It is confident that the spirit did not cease to function at Pentecost, or in the fourth and fifth centuries or in the Reformation Period. The true liberal is not a slave to pious phrases but a courageous adventurer toward the horizon that lies ahead. He is growing a soul and is deeply interested in assisting others to become growing souls by leading them into vital touch with the living God.

In order to lead other men into fellowship with God, the Minister must himself have a vital faith in the living God. It is the function of the minister to proclaim his convictions, and not to parade his doubts. Every Spiritual Conference has emphasized the need of sincerity and earnestness on the part of the

² *Why Worship*, pp. 32, 33.

Christian minister. The Spiritual leaders in Jesus' day played at religion, but Jesus challenged his followers to be real—"If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness!" (Matt. 6: 22).

Furthermore, the Conference has adhered to the teaching of the Bible—that man did not find God by his own search. The search began with God. "He first loved us." God has ever been striving to break through. Of course, he cannot reveal himself to men where there is no response. The Bible portrays a double search: God reaching down and man looking up. It is not by the intellect alone that man comes to a clearer understanding of the mind and purpose of God but by a continual response in following the light that he has. "The pure in heart shall see God." "Ever since the Greek idea of God became united with the Hebrew, there has been a certain tendency for professional theologians to emphasize the metaphysical attributes of God (power, etc.) at the expense of his moral and personal attributes (holiness, etc.), so prominent in Hebrew thought. Instead of the portrait of God being derived from the character of Christ, and from the concrete events of the Old Testament narrative, it has been deduced, by elaborate scholastic reasoning, from the notion of an Infinite First Cause. In reaction against this scholastic overstress upon the metaphysical side of God, modern liberal Protestant thought has come to stress the moral and personal character of God, as revealed in the forgiving, sacrificial love of his Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ."³

The Reformed Church has always emphasized the cultivation of the intellect and prided itself that it has an educated ministry. It seems to me that we have been too much afraid of the emotion. Other Churches, coming to our American Continent much later, but who did not separate the intellect from the emotion, have surpassed us in the growth of membership and influence. The Christian Church had its origin in an emotion—an emotion of love.

The intellect is formal, technical and gives direction to action, but it is the emotion that gives it the driving power "for the

³ *God*, by Horton, pp. 26, 27.

unification of theory and practice, of the intellect and the emotions in communal life is the essence of religion."⁴

As far as the writer knows, no one regularly attending these conferences has become a humanist. Our thinking together has brought us into a deeper appreciation of the God who is the *Father of all men*. We conceive of God not as an absolute Being, but as the "living God," active in this world of time and space, though not confined within it. He is immanent in the world but not as the sap is in the tree. It is not a material immanence. It is a spiritual immanence. We think of God as present in the world, as the poet is in his poetry, and the architect in the cathedral. He is also transcendent. The more we come to appreciate the Holy and Loving Father, whom Jesus revealed, the more conscious we become of our own selfishness—and need for repentance.

The God whom Jesus revealed is a Moral and Ethical God, the God who is holy and righteous. To worship Him does not require some particular form or manner of approach. Jesus said to the Samaritan Woman, "But a time is coming—indeed, has already come—when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for indeed the Father desires such worshippers. God is Spirit; and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4: 23 and 24).

To worship Him implies the transformation of character, or as the Apostle Paul put it, "I plead with you therefore, brethren, by the compassion of God, to present all your faculties to Him as a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to Him—a spiritual mode of worship. And do not conform to the present age, but be transformed by the entire renewal of your minds, so that you may learn by experience what God's will is, namely, all that is good and acceptable to Him and perfect" (Romans 12: 1, 2).

Our faith in God as the Father of all men is the motive for a deeper reverence for man. It is significant to note that the Gospels tell us that as Jesus passed by He saw a man sitting by the roadside begging—Jesus was not interested solely in saving souls. The purpose of His mission was to bring life. "I have come that they may have life, and may have it in abundance"

⁴ *Clue to History*, p. 209.

(John 10: 10). E. Stanley Jones tells the story about a Hindu student who upon his return home from England remarked, "If these people had loved me a little more and my soul a little less I might have become a Christian." Jesus saw in every one a potential child of God. He did not conceive of man as being totally depraved. He recognized that men's lives had become marred by sins, by shams and insincerities and that a great transformation had to take place.

The relation between God and man is not that of a householder and his steward; such a relationship is a legal one, and if the steward proves unfaithful the householder may say, "thou shalt no longer be steward."

Jesus portrayed God's relation to man like unto the relation between father and a son. Such a relationship implies a spiritual kinship. In the great parable of the son who wasted his life the father does not say, "thou art no longer my son," but he says, "For my son here was dead and has come to life again: he was lost and has been found."

Jesus placed a very high valuation upon man. He had faith in man and believed that a man, after he came to himself, confessing his sins, his follies and mistakes, would want to return to the Father. In the words of another, "He seems everywhere to imply that man essentially 'belongs' to God. His basic nature is spiritual, not carnal. The crucial process is coming to oneself."

Today human life is held cheap. Things are the master of men. The spirit of acquisitiveness has led men to exploit their fellow men. Man is thought of as a means to an end, and not as an end in himself. Again, man is at the mercy of a process. We have made great progress through scientific discoveries and inventions. Man has conquered nature. We live in an age of relative abundance. Poverty and starvation remain, not because we lack the power to produce, but because we have not accepted Jesus' sense of value—the infinite worth of every human being in the sight of God.

St. Paul reminds us that man is a spiritual personality, and to injure God's people is an awful sin. "Do you not know that you are God's sanctuary, and that the spirit of God dwells within

you? If any one destroys the sanctuary of God, God will destroy him; for the sanctuary of God is sacred, and this sanctuary you are" (1 Cor. 3: 16-17).

If we believe that Jesus taught that every man is a child of God, then every man has a claim on our reverence. Men are called to be sons of God and not to be cannon fodder. In these days when the message of hate is proclaimed so widely—the call comes with renewed emphasis to the members of this conference and to our Church—to consecrate ourselves anew to the proclamation that all men are called to be sons of God; and to realize our sonship we must share our lives with others. Love will replace hate, and co-operation will replace selfish competition. In the words of J. H. Oldham—"In face of the widespread devaluation of man to-day, the Church has the high mission of recalling men to a sense of the potentialities of their being. In a world in which life seems cheap, in which the individual often appears to be nothing more than a cog in a machine, and in which multitudes fritter away a trivial existence in a succession of new sensations and frivolous pleasures, men need to be saved from despair and an aimless existence by the reminder that they have been created for responsible selfhood as the children of God."⁵

I have heard Reformed Ministers criticize our Church because they feel that we do not have authority. The question is asked: "What is the theology of the Reformed Church?" Some of our ministers lament the fact that when they attend a worship service in the Reformed Church in some other community they do not find a common form of worship. Conformity or uniformity of worship does not necessarily give the Church the authority or the power to make it a vital factor in transforming the world.

The Reformed Church has always emphasized the centrality of Jesus, and the Spiritual Conference has played no little part in placing Him at the center of thought, and as the Head of the Church. In Him we find our authority. This is not the authority of Dogmatism, *i.e.*—"A settled opinion or a tenet held as firmly fixed"; "Doctrine asserted and adopted on authority as distinguished from that which is the result of one's own reasoning or experience."

⁵ "What Has Christianity to Say," Barry, p. 105.

The common people recognized that Jesus spoke with authority, and yet Jesus was not a law giver. We cannot find in the Gospels rules or laws or a system of ethics to guide us in the 20th century. Jesus did not call upon men to imitate Him—but He said “Follow me.” To follow Jesus is therefore a venture of faith; not adherence to a fixed formula, but loyalty to a personality.

It is the authority of discovery. In fellowship with Jesus the disciples were brought into a new experience of God. They discovered in him a unique representative of God. “And the word became flesh, and lived awhile in our midst, so that we saw His glory, glory such as a father bestows on his only son, full of grace and truth” (John 1: 14).

Saul of Tarsus, learned in the law, was familiar with the teachings of the prophets and their hope of the coming of a Deliverer, but he was so involved in the dogmatism of the law, that he was slow in recognizing the fulfillment of that hope. On the Damascus Road, Paul made a great discovery of the overwhelming significance of Jesus Christ. He writes, “I must tell you, brethren, that the gospel which I preach bears no human impress. For indeed it was not from man that I received or learnt it, but by a revelation from Jesus Christ” (Gal. 1: 11, 12).

Paul preached a living message. His teachings came not from hear-say, for he received them direct from Christ. He spoke with authority, not an authority handed down to him, as a dogma. It was the authority of discovery. Of course all dogmas were originally an experience before they were formulated into a doctrine. Dogmas are formulated when men try to express their inner souls' experience, *i.e.*, the faith or convictions by which they live. Men knew about a Trinity of Experience long before there was a doctrine of the Trinity. No fixed dogma or doctrine formulated in the 2nd, 3rd or 4th or 16th Century, can be final authority for the 20th century. There are critics of Liberalism who are ready to defend the faith delivered once for all to the saints without having the faith which made them saints.

The humble-minded person still finds his authority in Jesus Christ. He does not look to Him for finality, but he does discover in Him the power for creative living. He is deeply concerned

about discovering “What is the Mind and Spirit of Christ for me?” He ventures forth in a vital comradeship with the living Christ. The humble seeker after truth finds no fixed goal in Jesus. He is ever moving ahead—as St. Paul expresses it, “I do not say that I have already gained this knowledge or already reached perfection. But I press on, striving to lay hold of that for which I was also laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not imagine that I have yet laid hold of it. But this one thing I do—forgetting everything which is past and stretching forward to what lies in front of me, with my eyes fixed on the goal I push on to secure the prize of God's heavenward call in Christ Jesus” (Philippians III: 12-14).

No appraisal of the Conference should fail to note the part this Conference played in the training of professors for the School of the Prophets on the other side of College Avenue.

One of the most important features of the Spiritual Conference is the opportunity for fellowship. Different ministers have remarked, “I attend the Spiritual Conference because I enjoy the splendid fellowship with the brethren.”

Meeting together after the program in the Chapel, in groups under the trees, the Reception Hall and in the rooms—discussions of a high order are continued. In these smaller groups the ministers unburden their souls to one another and come to a more sympathetic understanding of one another. Here we can discuss our problems and receive kindly and helpful advice. Some of the younger ministers employ their leisure time, for the enrichment of life, in playing tennis and pitching quoits; and some of the older men play golf, probably to enrich their vocabulary.

Great credit is due to Dr. and Mrs. E. M. Hartman for this rich fellowship that we are privileged to enjoy at the Conference. They have been doing everything in their power to make the stay of the ministers at the Academy most delightful. It is true that the hair of Dr. and Mrs. Hartman has turned to silver, due probably to the strain under which they have labored to maintain the dignity and the name of the Spiritual Conference at the banquets on Thursday evening of the Conference Week. Whether this is true, or only a creation in the writer's imagination, the fact is that each year Dr. and Mrs. Hartman give a very cordial reception to the members of the Conference upon their return.

There is a great value in fellowship. For this is a twofold fellowship—a fellowship one with another and a fellowship with God.

The early Church had power because of those meetings in the Upper Room for fellowship—with one another and with God—and it was this twofold fellowship that bound them together and made them a fellowship of love.

The writer is convinced that if this Conference had been founded 30 years earlier, and if the Fathers had enjoyed the opportunity of meeting together in such a Spiritual Conference for mutual study and real fellowship, there would have been no liturgical controversy.

This conference has been a great unifying power. The graduates of the different Colleges and Theological Schools have met together here for study and fellowship, served on the same programs, exchanging thoughts and thus enriching one another, resulting in a better understanding of one another. It is very appropriate that on this year's program, we have a member of the Evangelical Group who has given us a splendid paper. In fellowshiping one with another, studying and thinking together, exchanging thoughts, we come to a deeper appreciation of one another. And thus, "lovingly hold to the truth, and shall in all respects grow up into union with Him who is our Head, even Christ" (Ephesians 4: 15).

The Fathers chose wisely when they named this Conference—THE SPIRITUAL CONFERENCE. Some years ago, a member of the Conference suggested that the word SPIRITUAL should be dropped. He probably felt that not sufficient time was given to meditation and prayer. In the words of another "We become spiritual when we become devoted to the divine purpose."

The Spiritual Conference has been an inspiration to many ministers to consecrate themselves whole-heartedly to the divine purpose, to become more efficient co-workers together with God in furthering the cause of His Kingdom. Here we cultivate the spirit of co-operation,—so essential in the work of the Church. John McMurray says, "Individualism, in which the individual self becomes its own end, is incompatible with the nature of action,

in which the end must lie outside the self. The impulse to self-realization is an impulse to spontaneous action."⁶

Today one frequently hears the statement made that we must defend Democracy and our Christian Religion. It is one of the arguments put forth to arouse a favorable sentiment for universal conscription or military training. Our Christian Religion needs no defense, but the world crisis is sounding an earnest call to professing Christians to be ready and willing to make the sacrifices necessary to live their faith. Thomas à Kempis was right when he said, "We must give the All for the All."

The Spiritual Conference does not formulate programs to send them down to the Church, but it gives inspiration to us Ministers to go forth proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ the son of God. C. H. Dodd says, "It is not a program for human action, but the proclamation of an act of God."⁷ The message that we proclaim is that Jesus is not merely a good man, but God incarnate. It is Good News that God and man are not so far separate, but that in spite of man's sin God seeks the sinner—Jesus revealed God as a father who so loved that He gave—and that his love is redemptive love.

Man is in need of a dynamic—he cannot save himself. Our present confusion in the world is due to the fact that we have organized life apart from God. It is the business of the Minister to bring men in touch with power. Ethical preaching never will bring in the Kingdom of God. The world will not be saved by good advice. The alcoholic may be advised to stop his drinking and he may want to change his way of life, but he lacks the power. The world of men has received sufficient good advice. Man must be brought in touch with the living God from whom cometh the power to redeem. The prodigal would have remained in the far country if he had not remembered the Father's love and it is the Father who restores him into the home. "Fetch the fat calf and kill it, and let us feast and enjoy ourselves; for my son here was dead and has come to life again: he was lost and has been found" (Luke 15: 23, 24).

We have a great Savior to proclaim in Jesus Christ. Of course

⁶ *The Clue to History*, p. 172.

⁷ *History and the Gospel*, p. 123.

He cannot save man unless man responds by way of repentance and faith. It is not the social Gospel that we preach—it is the Gospel of Jesus Christ applied to all the relationships of life. It is not Social Service. To live the Gospel of Christ means more than the binding up the wounds of those who fall into the hands of thieves on the Jericho Road. Surely our faith in the Gospel leads to the practicing of Charity, to the ministering to human needs, to the bringing about of better housing and improving the environment. But the Gospel of Jesus Christ does not stop there. It is Good News for the thief, for the vilest of sinners—It says to him, you are a sinner, you are lost—but God loves you. He will forgive you your sins and restore you to your rightful place as a Son of God.

Jesus had a passion for men, and He gave Himself, even unto death upon the Cross—in order to bring men into conscious fellowship with the heavenly Father.

Several years ago, Judge Paul N. Schaeffer read an interesting paper at this Conference, in which he emphasized the profound truth that the purpose of punishment should be redemptive. Here is a layman who has faith in the power of the Gospel of God that even the criminal may be redeemed.

The men who have given the Bible studies at the Conference have always presented this message of redemption. They have not confined their time to the critical exposition of the Bible but to the general theme that God has been revealing himself. “And all this is from God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and has appointed us ministers of this reconciliation, to tell how in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself, not charging men’s transgressions to their account, and how He has deposited with us the message of this reconciliation” (II Corinthians 5: 18, 19).

The purpose of an evaluation of anything is not the recording of occurrences, but an endeavor to discover the meaning and significance of facts. In making an appraisal of the Spiritual Conference we have not considered the historical development and growth of this organization but have endeavored to express what the Conference has meant to our ministry and our Church. The Conference has been a helpful guide in our thinking upon God.

We have been led to think of Him as the Transcendent God—The Other, but not the Absolute Other. God is approachable. He is seeking man—He is therefore also immanent, acting through nature and history. We still believe in the providence of God. The universe is not governed by chance—it is governed by God according to law.

In our thinking together—our faith in God has been deepened and it is our faith in God that has led us to think more highly of man—To see in every one “a man for whom Christ died,” and the message that we carry away from this Conference is that God was in Christ.

Having made this evaluation we may say with the Queen of Sheba: “Not half of the story has been told.”

Bethlehem, Pa.

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF THE
THE MINISTRY FROM THE LAYMAN'S
STANDPOINT*

GEORGE W. HARTMAN

I accepted the task of preparing a few paragraphs on the subject assigned me "The Ministry from the Layman's View Point," believing that it might not be difficult to write about some impressions that have come to me in forty or more years of church work as a layman. I find the task to be very much more difficult than I anticipated. Even now I have no conviction that the request for this paper was given to the right person. It is with humility and certainly not with a critical mind that I appear before you. It is likely that the program committee thought there could be given constructive criticism about ministers or their ministerial acts, the group of clergy who are ordained as christian ministers and the manner in which they conduct their ministry. The ministry collectively is composed of men who have been consecrated and educated and ordained to be the servants of God and to represent Christ upon earth.

It has been my fine good fortune to be closely associated with a great many ministers worthy of the name; therefore, I am very much more pro than anti in my approach to, and attitude toward the clergymen and the services they render.

My childhood home was a haven for preachers. At least ever since I can remember, its door was open to them; and for more than 40 years my own home has welcomed them. A goodly number have honored us by coming in. My parents and my family have taken great joy in this friendship which has not been limited to the clergy of our own denomination.

May I enumerate the names of the men who have been my pastors and teachers? Rev. John Ault was the first pastor whom I can remember. He served the Redeemer's Reformed Congregation of Littlestown. As I recall he was the father of Mrs. William Hoy, Mrs. Paul Gerhard, Mrs. James M. Mullan and Rev. John Ault, Jr. My second pastor was Rev. D. N. Dittmar who confirmed me. He was followed by Rev. George P. Stem, Rev. Frederick C. Seitz, Rev. J. Hamilton Smith. During Rev. Mr.

* A paper read at the Spiritual Conference at Lancaster, Pa., July 30, 1940.

REFORMED CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES

Smith's pastorate, or probably earlier than that, my membership was transferred from the Littlestown congregation to St. John's congregation, Harrisburg. The pastors, who served there in succession, were Revs. J. Rauch Stein, G. W. Hartman, Clayton H. Ranck, David Dunn, and Truman A. Crist, my present pastor. My college pastor was Rev. James Crawford, D.D., Philadelphia. The supply pastors, who have served St. John's are Drs. T. F. Herman and H. N. Bassler. My academic training was had under Rev. Walter E. Krebs, D.D. These names represent an admirable line of spiritual leaders whom it is an honor to have known, and from whom I received inspiration, benefit, and spiritual guidance. It is easy to see why I would not want to criticize ministers. If I did, I would be pointing the finger of scorn at a number of my relatives because with my brother heading the list, fourteen ministers in my relationship were trained and served during the past 75 years. They represent four generations and four denominations (Evangelical and Reformed, Lutheran, Methodist and Presbyterian).

Why should I criticize ministers? Well, in all frankness, because they are human and might deserve to be criticized.

I have a high regard for our trained highly educated ministry and I have great sympathy for them in meeting trials and solving difficult problems. Possibly they will find in the thoughts generated by this paper features they could criticize in their own plan of action and service, *i.e.*, their ministry. Thus there comes a negative criticism. I hold out qualities I would like my pastor to possess. You answer by your own consciousness, what you are. I might be wrong.

It is readily conceded that all of our pastors, some more consistently than others, honor their calling, hold to their vows and follow the teachings and example of Christ. Clergymen and laymen are human. Should we expect from priests absolute righteousness or but a reasonable degree of personal purity; also that they be good ambassadors of Him? But, let them act out the implication of a minister whom I knew long ago, who told his people that he drank from the same spiritual waters they did, but "higher up."

How are men and women called to service. I think many of

them respond because of the fervent prayers of devout parents; others to some inspirational contact, sermon or incident which results in a conviction to preach the Gospel and minister to people; others may receive the urge more incidentally. It might be observed that the earlier the sacred call comes the better, because the prospective or embryonic servant of God will then have opportunity to shape all influences and studies toward spiritual, mental and moral training for his future activities. Much time can be devoted to bible study. Readings can include books on theology and (when sufficiently advanced) books on religious rites, practices and customs. Preparations for the holy calling will be a constant aim, with controlled actions in society as a guide in mental desires and decisions. Worldly desires and temptations are to be pushed aside as much as possible.

We raise the question here: Should the candidates for the ministry give studied consideration to the subject of matrimony; and, if so, should or could there be thoughtful planning for unions with sweethearts who might have extraordinary qualifications to preside in the manse and to support them in their parish work? We know of preachers' wives who appear to be strong characters who inspire their husbands and are the real cause of their success. Unfortunately, a contrary situation can occur.

When full fledged and ordained, the minister is ready for his special work as God's elect. We feel sure that when such a person is installed as pastor, minister, preacher or priest, he or she realizes that the ability to function and the power to preach come from God, through Christ whom they have promised to follow and to serve. They realize, too, the great responsibility they have under God as shepherds of the flock. If they would win the highest honors and do the greatest good, they must love people, enjoy hard work, be willing to sacrifice, to serve and to sympathize—*i.e.*, preach by life and action. Pastoral duties as well as the preaching accomplishment must be conscientiously done. Preaching, doctrinal elucidation of the scriptures and allied duties are theirs to do; but, and just as important, they have to be equipped to deal with inquirers, the broken hearted and the worldly; to preach funeral sermons, to make converts (with opportunities at most unexpected times), to visit the sick, inspire and comfort their people and administer the communion.

I believe, the ideal preacher will stick to the gospel and preach the word of God. The church suffers when preachers sermonize on the sexual, or current social items even when such sermons are to be an interpretation of God's wish for his children. Not being a minister, I do not know how hard it is to keep pagan and controversial matters out of the sermon, but my belief is that there is too great a tendency to deal with changes that have come in civic matters, labor relationships and other social problems without proper regard for the biblical directions of the Old and New Testament concerning them. I am sure there are many who will wish to discuss any reference to the types, quality or length of sermons which the layman think the preacher should preach. There should be short and long sermons. Some texts if treated in a discourse of a few minutes will fall flat and dishonor the inspired gospel.

Should a layman express an opinion about the wisdom or value of formal worship? A ceremonial to inspire worship, adoration of, and bowing to the will of God is difficult to project and arrange so as to meet the need of all.

Forms are excellent and often lead to a better understanding of the theme and plan of the worship service. The desire for, and enjoyment of the strictly formal worship service may depend upon the training of early life, etc. The formal rendition of the music, prayer and scriptural interpretation may bring forth more fervent worship. There are those who do not enjoy the formal. It is unwise to contend with and discourage such from coming to worship. It might be possible to gain their confidence and cooperation if they are in the minority by kindly efforts to clarify and explain the beauty in the "forms."

Shall there be mid-week and Sunday evening meetings? Many refer to the slump noticed here and thoroughly regret it. Some feel that the clergy is yielding without sufficient effort in the fighting spirit to overcome it.

The Christian lay people may have the answer. They should more fully support these services and overcome the overwhelming influence of paganism which springs from non-christian business interests. More and more, selfishness and greed are allowed to crowd out Christian motives and Christ-like living.

I believe that if both ministers and laymen were to take Christ more fully as their example—His life, His works and His great sacrifice and act accordingly, they would not go wrong in their efforts to serve their fellows. The minister needs many qualifications that are difficult to procure except by hard work, long hours, and much study. Not everyone wishes to, or could become a great city-wide, state-wide, nation-wide preacher. But I feel that one, if there is such, who lacks ambition to do his very best on every occasion and would not make special preparation for sick visitation, or who is unwilling to attend and lead auxiliary meetings, etc., can not be at his best. Much preparation may be needed for the sermon to be used at the time of burial. One should give a sufficient amount of time, in preparing sermons to convince himself that he has a message and the power to deliver it, or he is not doing himself justice.

The young minister of today has much in the way of educational advantage, social privilege and general domestic and institutional refinement, that the minister of a half century ago did not have. I wonder whether the percentage of fine spirited ministers is as large now as in former years. The minister who loves his people and loves his parish work will be given grace to do good work by a Heavenly Father who is present in Spirit with him.

The man of God needs to have no one introduce him to those around him as being a minister. Not his garb but his personality identifies him. Many pastors I have met are skillful in their ministry especially in comforting the sick, the suffering and the dying. Probably the outstanding one of the Harrisburg Ministerium was Rev. Ellis N. Kremer, D.D., known to many of you. He served Salem congregation but he was affectionally known as the "pastor of Harrisburg." Other men of outstanding Christian personality whom I have met are Drs. Benjamin Bausman, N. S. Calender, Dwight L. Moody. There are those serving the church now and in attendance here who qualify according to these specifications.

Sick visitation is one of the most important of all pastoral functions. Happy is the minister who has a successful manner and happy thoughtful routine. In no other function is the adage

more literally true that "we learn to do by doing" than in getting an acceptable sick visitation custom. Routine is not a good word to use here because one must see and minister to individuals, that is to a person as an individual, because there is no mass plan that is likely to be satisfying to pastor and patient.

Most patients accept graciously a cheerful voice, reassuring face, a congenial personality, lively conversation, with not much humor or levity, quotations from the scripture and prayer; and a victorious exit.

A group of pastors were commenting after our recent meeting. One reported what he considered to be a failure in hospital visitation in a case where bedside prayer was omitted on account of fancied patient-attitude and ward conditions. The patient, disappointed, called the pastor of another denomination to come and "pray" and administer the sacraments (to my friend's discomfort). Another said: "Should one pray on every sick call?" Another answered the question by saying: "When I am in doubt I pray." Shall we "examine the record" to learn how Jesus ministered to those in physical distress? We find that he acted with wisdom. He had a thorough understanding of the mind and body of man. He had the *power* which he exercised in love with simple dignity.

There can be fundamentals for all to follow, but each pastor has his own responsibility. He can sense the proprieties or do what conscience dictates in the hope that what he does will help the ill person. Most people have faith in the efficacy of prayer and when ill want prayers spoken to help and comfort them. The minister can with common good judgment seize upon such opportunity to exhibit devotion and stress the love of God for His afflicted ones and be in truth a spiritual adviser. If one has been a sufferer, he can realize how patients feel and sense what is needed when visiting the sick.

I have found so great satisfaction in meeting ministers professionally that I recommend to all pastors to learn to know the physicians of their communities, exchange courtesies with them and have mutual confidences. A satisfying fellowship may result. Such a happy situation will bear fruit in the labors of both parties

and the patient may be the greatest beneficiary of an obvious triple alliance.

I feel that I would miss an opportunity if I did not refer in this connection, to the lay "ministry" of the church in which my colleagues who are serving as elders and deacons, play a part. We have been called to "uphold the hands of the minister" and to care for the temporal things of the Kingdom. The elders and deacons are a great power for good and add to the strength of our religious organizations. They, too, realize the sanctity of the vows they have taken and strive to be faithful. We may all fall far short of our full capacity to do what calls for action. The selection of church officers should be made carefully. At ordination and at every installation we should have well stressed to us the importance of intelligent and aggressive pursuit of the duties of the office; the solemn trust entailed, and the fact that the promises made comprehend loyalty to the Master, to the pastor, and to the people of the fold as well. Consistories should all read the "Messenger," attend all consistory meetings and denominational gatherings in order to glean knowledge on the best methods with which to conduct congregational routine. Our private pledge is to give of our talent, our time and our tithe. One alert deacon asked whether he could not enlist in a training course for newly elected consistories. I believe he "has something there." Maybe our leaders could devise such a "course" or at least publish a new up-to-date book (simple and understandable) on this important department of church work.

My criticism is that we are guilty of inactivity, tardiness and indifference. If so, omissions rob us of the joy of great accomplishment and keep the church from having the benefit of its officer-man power. Shall we not strive for consecration to have fuller devotion to Christ and His church so as to function as effective lay leaders. Shall we not pray more, possibly more earnestly, in searching for the solution of personal and national problems which solution lies at the foot of the Throne of grace. "The way out is the way up." It calls for Christians who will "pray without ceasing." Let us have in front of us, on desk or table, a card bearing the quotation "Prayer changes things." It is hoped that

the love of Christ and the fraternal in man will eliminate the great disregard for the sanctity of human life. The around-the-world Christianity can do it if all are sincere and some as faithful as those dictator-defying pastors in the German Reich.

In conclusion let me say that I have great hopes for closer cooperation between the clergy and their laymen; also better understanding of mutual problems and better religious working plans for all. Let there be only constructive criticism if any. Let each and all so strive to fill his place and to control his emotions that no one, not even the Heavenly Father will find it necessary to criticize.

Our earnest prayer is that God will graciously vouchsafe prosperity, peace and good works to all of the clergy and to all of the members of our denomination and especially to the officers, board members, elders and deacons wherever they may be serving *Him*.

The Keystone Hospital,
Harrisburg, Pa.

BOOK REVIEW

Can Religious Education Be Christian? Harrison S. Elliott. The Macmillan Company, 1940.

The title of this significant volume does not suggest at once the exact nature and content of the book. The first sentence of the Preface, on the contrary, does so quite explicitly: "The issues which are discussed in this book are those which have emerged because of the conflicts between the historic Protestant conception of religious education and a modern social and experience-centered theory and practice." And the heading of the first chapter reads: "The Source of Basic Conflicts."

The book then is a full-length treatment of the fundamental differences between the traditional program of Protestant churches on the one hand and the modern religious education movement on the other. Professor Elliott makes no attempt to gloss over the differences between the two. The latter is not merely a slightly altered method of performing the same task as the former envisioned (namely, the proclamation of a message), but it represents a distinct approach with far-reaching implications. They are really two separate "streams of influence," like two rivers approaching a point of confluence from two different angles. The former takes its start in theology; the latter begins with a psychological study of the persons with whom it deals. The former tends to be authoritarian; the latter democratic. The former in its education of oncoming generations would stress the necessity of transmitting to them revealed truth; the latter would place great emphasis on catching them up in a creative experience.

Dr. Roy G. Ross, general secretary of the International Council of Religious Education, has intimated in a review of Professor Elliott's book that the conflicts may not be as marked as they are represented by him to be. This judgment of Dr. Ross's is probably true. And yet, where there are actual differences, we gain nothing in the long run by pretending ostrich-like that they do not exist. Professor Elliott, it should be added, is of the opinion that these two streams were well on the way to a fusion through mutual accommodation, until the advent of the neo-orthodoxy in theology. That has sharpened the outlines of the conflict afresh.

The book contains from time to time brilliant analyses of one

phenomenon or another in our religious life. For example, there is the psychological analysis of the several notions of sin which have been or are now current. In the neo-orthodoxy whose original home is Europe sin is commonly conceived as rebellion against the majesty of God. What else, Professor Elliott says in effect, could you expect within a society where authority prevails in home, church, and state, and an individual can achieve freedom only through rebellion with an attendant sense of guilt? In earlier America sin was defined in terms primarily of moral lapses—intemperance, theft, sexual delinquencies, and the like. This notion was framed to a considerable extent against the background of an English social structure where such evils were rampant and their heinousness keenly felt. Within modern America sin is thought of as a too great following of one's own ambitious will to the neglect of God's will for all of life. This too is the form the sin-concept would most naturally take in a land of unbridled individualism, where every boy is told he can become President and the ego-strivings of each person are encouraged to the utmost.

Professor Elliott's thought has by no means remained unaffected by the newer trends in theology. For example, he says at one point (p. 212): "By this is not meant that the Kingdom of God can be fully realized in the human scene." Another indication of acquiescence in the measure of truth contained within the neo-orthodoxy is to be found on p. 233: "The emphasis upon 'judgment' and 'crisis' in certain theological interpretations at the present time is a necessary corrective of the easy optimism with which religious educators often went about their work." But while his mind is open, it is not servile. He remains throughout true to certain basic convictions which have characterized his work and his teaching for the last several decades.

Perhaps the most distinctive single mark of the book, weaving in and out through the chapters like a golden thread, is a confidence—a confidence in the process of free spirits grappling creatively with the environment in which they are set. This process is the educational process; it is education. Despite all its limitations and failures, it can be trusted. The human nature which participates in it can at long last be trusted. It is assumed of

course that this human nature will not "go it alone," but will be under the constant discipline of making earnest with the finest Christian experience of past generations. This educational process is in complete harmony with the original genius of the Reformation—namely, the assertion of the right of the believer to forge his own interpretations of the Christian faith. It is actually the matrix wherein our present Christian faith was formulated. It is also the means by which this faith can best be kindled afresh in each new generation. It deserves to be normative for the Church's work and program.

Not all readers will agree with Professor Elliott's approach nor with some of his conclusions. His doctrine of God, for instance, seems to fall short of the personal theism which is both precious and reasonable to so many of us. But all alike will respect the vigor of his mind and the earnestness of his purpose; and they will profit from his thought, even when they are impelled to differ from him in major or minor details.

—N.C.H.

BOOKS RECEIVED

- A Primary Teacher's Guide on Migrants.* Armilda B. Keiser. Paper, 25¢.
- A Junior Teacher's Guide on Migrants.* E. Mae Young. Paper, 25¢.
- A Course for Young People and Seniors on "Shifting Populations in America."* Kenneth D. and Ethel Prince Miller. Paper, 25¢.
- Discussion and Program Suggestions for Adult Groups on "Shifting Populations in America."* Benson Y. Landis and Avis E. Harvey. Paper, 25¢.
- At Home on the Road.* Paper, 10¢.
- Across the Fruited Plain.* Florence Crannell Means. Cloth, \$1.00. Paper, \$0.50.
- A Primary Teacher's Guide on China.* Phyllis Newcomb Maramarco. Paper, 25¢.
- A Junior Teacher's Guide on China.* Estella H. Lane. Paper, 25¢.
- A Course on China for Seniors and Young People.* Marguerite H. Clarke. Paper, 25¢.
- Discussion and Program Suggestions on China.* Katharine V. Silverhorn. Paper, 25¢.
- Five Stories About China.* Paper, 10¢.
- The Amazing Chinese.* Willis Lamott. Paper, 25¢.
- Stand By for China.* Gordon Poteat. Cloth, \$1.00. Paper, \$0.60.
- Bright Sky Tomorrow.* Mary Brewster Hollister. Cloth, \$1.00. Paper, \$0.50.
- Dangerous Opportunity.* Earle H. Ballou. Cloth, \$1.00. Paper, \$0.60.
- Missionary Worship Programs.* Bessie L. Doherty. Paper, \$0.25.
- More Missionary Stories to Tell.* Cloth, \$1.00. Paper, \$0.50.
- Wings Over China (The Chiang Kai-sheks).* Basil Mathews. Paper, 10¢.
- Soldier's Heroine (Florence Nightingale).* W. G. Wilson. Paper, 10¢.

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF THE

They Thought He Was Mad (Albert Schweitzer). Ruth Henrich. Paper, 10¢.

The Book in the Pillow (Adoniram Judson). Pat Yates. Paper, 10¢.

The foregoing books and pamphlets have a number of things in common. They were all published in the same year—1940. They were all published by the same press—the Friendship Press. They all have to do with the same subject—missions, at home and abroad. And they all constitute excellent material for the purposes of missionary education.

Aside from these points in common, there are certain differences among them. The first six have to do with a phase of National Missions—the migrants of America. The next nine have to do with a phase of International Missions—China. The last six are miscellaneous in character. The first of these, *Missionary Worship Programs*, supplies a need that is frequently felt. It contains ten worship services on missionary themes, designed with a small one-room Sunday school particularly in mind. A final word should be said about the four little booklets that stand at the end of the list. They are biographical gems of a sort that should prove exceedingly useful. They constitute units in a series which goes by the name of *Eagle Books*. These are further described as “true stories of real people . . . written especially for boys and girls.” Twenty-eight volumes have already been issued, and more are promised in the future. They can be ordered from the Friendship Press, or from our own denominational publishing-houses.

—N.C.H.