

Bryan Station Baptist Church

INDEPENDENT

MISSIONARY

THE PIONEER BAPTIST

ORGANIZED 1786

VOL. 19, NO. 6
MARCH, 1988

"Preaching The Same Truth We Preached Before Kentucky Was A State"

THE MINISTER AND HIS MISSION

By DR. C. D. COLE, Dean Emeritus, Toronto Baptist Seminary

"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. 4:1).

"Take heed unto thyself and to the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4:16).

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2).

"This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work" (1 Tim. 3:1).

THESE TEXTS and others which I will use describe a good minister of Jesus Christ and tell of his mission. The greatest office to which a man can be called is to the work of the ministry — to the office of bishop. A minister of Christ is called bishop, elder, and pastor to indicate his several duties. The word "bishop" means overseer, and when the church is looked at as a crew of workmen, then the minister is a bishop or overseer — he is to oversee the work of the church. When the minister is considered in his dignity and authority he is an elder, and we read of elders that rule well being counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine (1 Tim. 5:17). In the Old Testament elders of Israel were a sort of governing body; in the New Testament the elder is the same as bishop and pastor, considered as having authority (Heb. 13:17). When the church is thought of as a flock then the minister is called a pastor or shepherd. When the minister's work reaches beyond his own church then he is an evangelist. The evangelist is a kingdom worker, while the work of the bishop, elder, and pastor is confined to the particular church he is called to serve.

The ministry is a work, whether in the offices of bishop or elder or pastor or evangelist (1 Tim. 3:1, 5:17).

The ministry is a glorious work — nothing comparable to it among earthly professions. When Felix Carey, son of the immortal William Carey, accepted the post of Ambassadorship from the King of England, his father said with a broken heart, "My Felix has dwindled into an ambassador". Felix had been trained for the ministry, and his father hoped he would be a good minister of Christ. John Sharp Williams had a long and illustrious career

in the United States Senate, and when he delivered his farewell address to the Senate, he said that he had rather be a hound dog and bark at the moon than to spend another year in the Senate. But no God-called preacher feels this way when he comes to the end of his work as a minister of Christ.

The ministry is a serious and solemn undertaking. It involves tremendous responsibility. It is work before which the noblest saints of earth hesitated. Jeremiah, when called to speak for God, hesitated, saying, "Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child." And it was only after God said, "I will be with thee," that he dared to speak. Isaiah, when called, was so filled with a sense of unworthiness, that it was not until one of the seraphims took a live coal from off the altar and put it upon his mouth, saying, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips! and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged," that he said, "Here am I; send me." The Apostle Paul in the face of the responsibilities of the ministry, cried out, "Who is sufficient for these things?" And his soul was not quieted until he could say, "Our sufficiency is of God."

I. THE PREACHER'S QUALIFICATIONS

1. He must be a good man. Barnabas was a good man and full of faith and of the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:24). He must have a good report of them that are without (1 Tim. 3:7). The preacher must have a good name in the community. He need not be loved by the world, but he must have the respect and confidence of the world. Nothing will take the place of character in a preacher. A preacher with a shady character is doomed to failure. "Take heed to thyself. Watch your step for there are many pitfalls in the ministry." Paul said to Timothy: "Watch thou in all things." The fall of Noah is



a special warning to all preachers. He was a preacher of righteousness and a man of faith, and yet in an unguarded moment he sinned and fell and was laid on the shelf. Noah lived 300 years after his fall, but this period of his life was a blank-nothing recorded of him thereafter (1 Cor. 9:27). A preacher's son was asked what he was going to be when he grew up. He hesitated awhile and then said, "Well, I can't quite make up my mind whether I shall be a preacher or a Christian."

2. The minister must be a man of faith. He must believe implicitly in the Bible as the Word of God. A preacher must have conviction. The truth he preaches must reach the inward parts of his being. The preacher must have an inward urge that compels utterance. Jeremiah, in the face of ridicule and persecution, decided to stop preaching. But he could not, for he said, "His word was in mine heart as a burning fire, shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." Peter and John, forbidden to speak in the name of Jesus, said to the Sanhedrin, "We cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard." That was irresistible utterance. Can the word of God be bound? Let Peter answer from a Roman cell: "I suffer trouble as an evil doer, even unto bonds, but the word of God is not bound." Can the word of God be bound? Let Bunyan reply from Bedford jail: When offered his freedom if he would quit preaching, he said, "Turn me out today and I will preach tomorrow." Can the word of God be bound? Let the price our fathers paid for preaching give answer.

3. The minister must exercise patience. Paul exhorts Timothy to endure afflictions. Patience implies trial and opposition. In patience we are to suffer and wait in the path of duty. Judson laboured six years in Burma before he had his first convert. We must be patient with those who are dull and oppose the truth (2 Tim. 2:24f.). A woman went into the vestry of Dr. Joseph Parker to thank him for the help she received from his sermons. "You do throw such light on the Bible," she said, "until this morning I had always thought Sodom and Gomorrah were man and wife." Robert Burdette once preached at the funeral of a spiritist. The widow did not like the sermon. She told Burdette she had just been in communication with her dear husband and that he told her that the description the preacher had given of heaven was purely fictitious. Burdette replied that he had been preaching forty years and had delivered thousands of funeral addresses and this was the first time he had ever had any back chat from the corpse.

4. The preacher must be a student (2 Tim. 2:15). When a preacher ceases study, he immediately takes the dry rot. He begins to decay. B. H. Carroll said: "My son, you are in great danger. You have been complimented so much for your maiden sermons that you have quit studying. You have no library and do not read. You have already contracted the habit of preaching over your first dozen revival sermons. The first time such a sermon is like a juicy roast, the next time it is only warmed over, next time it is hash, and after that it is just soup out of the bones." Booker T. Washington was called to a church to counsel in the pastor's claim to his salary. One of the sturdy members of the

church silenced him with the statement, "We done paid for them sermons last year." Timothy had known the Holy Scriptures from a child, and yet Paul told him to study and to give himself to reading.

5: The preacher must be a man of courage. I am not thinking of worldly bravado, but about courage of convictions. The worst kind of slavery is that of a man-fearing preacher. What little stamina there is today in Christianity is due under God to courageous preachers. One day Calvin warned Knox of the danger of displeasing Queen Mary. Knox replied: "If she were ten thousand times more queen than she is, I would tell her of her sins." Luther advised Melancthon to so preach that men would fall out with sin or fall out with him.

6. Sincerity is another necessary quality in the preacher. Insincerity is a common but unconscious sin. A preacher's son at the dinner table said to his father, "Daddy, was what you said in your sermon today really true or were you just preaching?" A man said to his pastor: "Pastor, that was a wonderful sermon, but we were wondering if you walks as you talks." One preacher confessed: "I'm like a train caller, calling out stations down the line to which I myself do not go." Another said: "I am opinionated and call it conviction." Another put his dualism this way: "I didn't sin, because I was so proud that I didn't want to have to apologize afterwards." And thus one sin—the sin of pride kept him from other sins. A woman indignantly dismissed her maid, saying, "I had to dismiss her because I found she was stealing my lovely Waldorf-Astoria towels." Her indignation at another's dishonesty made her forget her own thievery.

II. THE PREACHER'S BUSINESS

1. The preacher's business is to preach. He is not an efficiency expert nor a popular lecturer. He is not a magician, nor an artist, but a proclaimer of eternal truths. There is no safe substitute for preaching. What is needed today is great preachers. We have many smart men in the pulpits. We have men of eloquence, men who can deliver wonderful addresses, but few really great preachers; few expositors of the Word of God. We need to get back to the primacy of preaching. Paul says: "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

2. The preacher is to preach the Word. The New Testament preacher is not a priest with wine and wafers on the way to the sick room, but a man who interprets God's Word to the people.

3. He is to preach all the word. All Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16). Paul says, "I am free from the blood of all men because I have not shunned to declare all the counsel of God." Mr. Preacher, I charge you not to ignore great blocks of Scripture. Face every doctrine and seek to know it.

4. The preacher is to preach all the time — in season and out of season, when men want the truth and when they do not want it, when it is popular and when it is unpopular. Men hated Christ because of what he preached. Again and again He would turn the crowds against Him by preaching

unpopular truths. One day He said, "No man can come unto me except it were given unto him of my Father." And the evangelist's comment was, that from that moment many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him.

OLD NATURE

PRACTICE WHAT YOU KNOW!

"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth," I John 3:18.

Many Christians have allowed their knowledge of the truth to outdistance their practice. They remind me of a story in *GLAD TIDINGS* by James Kallam. He tells of a young book salesman who was assigned to a rural area. Seeing a farmer seated in a rocking chair on his front porch, the young man approached him with all the zeal of a newly trained salesman. "Sir," he said, "I have here a book that will tell you how to farm 10 times better than you are doing it now." The farmer continued to rock. After a few seconds he stopped, looked at the young fellow and said, "Son, I don't need your book. I already know how to farm 10 times better than I'm doing it now."

Christians have a knowledge that the unregenerate do not have. If we simply hoard it and do not put it to use, it becomes "odious" like the manna of old when it was kept till the next day (Exodus 16:20). Paul cautioned in I Corinthians 8:1, "Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth." What awesome responsibility rests upon all who have come to know the Savior!

Our salvation should touch the heart, the head, and the heels. Having it in the heart makes us believers; having it in the head makes us informed; having it in the heels makes us practicing Christians. Notebooks filled with truth and stored on the shelf cater to the "puffed up" attitude. But when their contents are translated into shoe leather, we become "doers of the word and not hearers only."

Think about it. Has your practice kept pace with your knowledge?

Who learns and learns

But acts not what he knows

Is one who plows and plows

But never sows.

--Copied

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one." Romans 3:10.

Do you remember seeing this advertisement a number of years ago?-- "Take your keys out of your car. Don't help a good boy go bad." This implies that if you leave your keys in the car, you are guilty of corrupting a good boy. If he steals your car, the boy was already bad! The Bible says there is none righteous. Modern man says that man is not so bad; if he is put in a good environment, with no evil influences, he will be just fine.

Suppose you go out in the woods and find a baby rattlesnake, just as cute as can be. You take him home for a pet, keeping him away from the influence of all the other bad snakes. You fix up a little speaker system and play only Christian music for him. Every day, you sit down and read your Bible out loud to your pet rattlesnake. You even get some special perfume for him, and tie a red ribbon around his neck. Will all of this change the nature of the rattlesnake? No, there is still death in his strike. Just as this is true, you cannot cultivate a sinful nature out of man. He is born with it. Only through the redeeming work of Christ can a man find new life.

Let's thank the Lord for His salvation, and let's ask Him to help us tell the Good News of the gospel of Christ to someone we meet today.

B. Taylor