

Church with earthly affairs. This is not, as it proudly boasts, a new and advanced interpretation of the gospel, but a reversion to the mistaken views of the Jews as to the mission of the Messiah, with the addition of some features of Buddhism. The fatal error of this popular perversion of the gospel permeates the whole body of our religious thought and enfeebles every force in Christian character. In the place of the solemn duties of Christian life it proclaims a gospel of amusement as the only way to secure and maintain, in an age like ours, the sympathies and allegiance of the young, and in keeping with this reckless assumption the Church and the ministry are called upon to furnish playhouses and all sorts of worldly entertainments. Seemingly they utterly forget that the gospel is not a system of world sports, but the dreadful power of God unto the salvation of sinners, a task full of all the solemnity of an everlasting destiny. It is a gospel born in blood, and the tragic notes of Calvary's agonies are never out of it. Shall the summit of this blood-stained mountain be graded off for a baseball diamond, and the garden of Joseph be rented for a place of Sabbath loafing and worldly gayeties? Shall the emblems of His broken body and sacrificial blood be removed from the sacred table and it devoted to the careless whims of the whist club? No amount of witty sneers or cheap mockery from the lips of a worldly ministry are sufficient to prove that the grave countenances and solemn spirits of our fathers were pharisaical airs practiced in the name of Jesus. These men were profoundly sensible of eternity and their religion had in it a becoming dignity and a heavenly majesty. And if it be true that the young of these times cannot be saved except by making a sport out of the gospel, then their destiny is sealed; the issue is settled. The atoning mission of Jesus among men is not to furnish earthly amusements, but to save sinners from death and eternal doom."

#### *The Cheapening of the Gospel.*

"The apostles of secularism have reduced the kingdom of God to a world-condition, the gospel to a social asset and the Church to an organization whose end is earthly betterment. In keeping with their perversions of truth they seek the defense of our religion in the social values to be derived through it, and employ the resources of the Church for the promotion of all sorts of schemes which they deem helpful to civilization and human comforts.

As the inevitable outcome of such a blunder there are widespread confusion of thought, conflict of efforts, shallowness of conviction, increasing defeats and a growing sense of insecurity of faith. They tell us that the kingdom of God must come in the world, that the New Jerusalem is to be among men and that Christ has already come among men. And every human ill or earthly evil in society, industry or government they charge to the account of the failures of the Church to meet the world's present needs. They disturb God's saints and deadbeat their benevolence for the care of fads and projects out of which futile commissions make a living for a short while. They encourage infidels, thugs and criminals to charge to the church the shame and sufferings of their own creation, and inspire a far-reaching hatred against our holy religion. With a slim attempt at wit they say, "That religion is worthless the benefits of which one must die to gain." To this vain sentimentalism it is proper to reply, "That religion is a conceit and a fraud which proposes to remove human ills and transform the world into a scene of heavenly peace and undisturbed joy." Our Lord knew

that the faith centered in eternity and the soul inspired by the hopes of everlasting life constitute the one spirit which might be trusted to feel for sinners, help the poor and oppose the ravages of sin. It is not the time possessed soul, but the heaven-ruled spirit into whose hands may be trusted the care of the lambs and the feeding of the sheep."

Christ never preached a gospel of expediency, time-serving or material advantage. The dominant note of his message was, "He that loseth his life shall find it, and that saveth his life shall lose it." He had the perspection of eternity, for eternal realities filled his heart. And so they fill the God called God equipped preachers heart today. He is not afraid to bank all on the promise of the Master who said, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness and all things needful shall be added unto you."

We have come to a time when recruits for the ministry are not sufficient to meet the demand; and we have heard a brother more than once publicly declare one of the benefits of the great permanent fund will be to draw young men into the ministry because of the guarantee it gives them of comfort and support in old age. If this be the motive that brings young men into the pulpit, then we can say good-bye to all the spirit that made Methodism glorious in the past. We must say good-bye to that spirit which makes every true preacher in apostolic succession with Peter, John and Paul, and instead, welcome the spirit that will make the preacher in line with Judas Iscariot who carried the bag and was anxious to save something for a rainy day. We will have a lot of preachers whose convictions will go no deeper than their personal advantage and whose estimate of success will be according to material standards. The end of their preaching will be to establish a kingdom of meat and drink, not one of "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Before the Wesleyan revival it is said by one that you could not tell by the doctrine of the average preacher whether he was a Mohammedan, a pagan or a Jew. Where there was no vision the people perished." God touched John Wesley's heart with Holy fire; the scholarly and finished essay writer was transformed into the Messenger of God. It is true his services were no longer acceptable in the pulpits that once gave him hearty welcome. The power of the message disturbed the self-satisfied and well fed ecclesiastic who imagined all was well with the kingdom because things were favorable to himself. But in the open air Wesley called men to repentance and faith and miracles of grace were wrought as in the early days. Some one said, "those Methodists preached a gospel which flung a ray of hope to every sinner out of Hell, was as gentle as the sunlight of God and as generous as the heart of Jesus."

In the discipline we have Wesley's advice as to preaching. He said: "Our preaching ought to be to convince, to offer Christ, to invite, to build up, and to do this in some measure in every sermon. The most effectual way of preaching Christ is to preach him in all his offices and to declare his law as well as his gospel both to believers and unbelievers. Let us strongly and closely insist upon both inward and outward holiness in all its branches." To spread scriptural holiness over the land is often declared to be purposes for which God raised up the people called Methodists. The phrase ought to be more than a pious platitude or a glittering generality. Our God is a holy God, His character has been revealed in a holy book. He incarnates himself in a Holy Christ, who came to "raise up a horn of salvation that

we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear in righteousness and true holiness, before Him all the days of our life." And then when we die we are to go to a holy Heaven, to live forever in a state of holiness. The true gospel preacher must make the diagnosis and preach the remedy. If the devil be strong thank God for a Christ who is omnipotent; if sin is deep seated and malignant, yet the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, can purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God." "Where sin abounded grace does much more abound." "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's son cleanseth from all sin." The preacher must not deal in opiates when purgatives are needed. A gospel of rose-water can never take the place of the gospel of the cross. The preacher must aim in the sermon not to give the people what they want but what they need. But this does not mean that he is to assume a belligerent attitude, but in love and earnestness declare God's remedy for sin. Sin not as a defect that clings to man in his undeveloped state; a species of animalism that must be sloughed off in a process of gradual development; but sin the disease of the soul which may be cured here and now by Christ the great physician. Dr. Joseph Smith says, "some may call me a hobbyist if I persistently dwell on such a theme," but he added, "I deny the accusation. I am not a hobbyist but a hubbist; living at the center of things and emphasizing the central idea of our Christianity."

The aim every sermon should be to create and perfect faith in the hearts of men; a faith that assures them of eternal realities, and which does not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

We hear the great apostle of the gentiles saying to the Corinthians, "And I brethren, when I came unto you came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified. And my speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power that your faith might not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God." Paul's sermons did not lack in ethical distinction and practical application, but above all they rang true to the Pentecostal standard of salvation. And a Christ who had saved him from his bigotry, narrowness, phariseism and prejudice he felt certain was sufficient to save any man no matter how vile or respectable. Paul preached the Christ of experience. Emphasizing those doctrines that enabled the auditor to intelligently seek and find the experience preached. Therefore he was pre-eminently the doctrinal preacher. And let no preacher speak disparagingly of the doctrines of grace, for it is the preaching of these, the Holy Ghost honors. Justification by faith, sanctification by faith, become experimental realities when preached in the power of experience the doctrines represent. We heard a professor of homiletics in a Baptist Theological seminary tell his class that undoubtedly the Methodists have the most preachable theology of any church. Only last Fall we heard Dr. A. M. Hills, who was educated at Oberlin and Yale, and is now the author of twenty three books say that "Wesley's theology is the only system of doctrine that will stand the test of the New Testament. Truly, ours is a noble heritage. Our history on hyvenology and theology have been dominated by the music of a full salvation. And as long as sin is what it is, and the need of human hearts remain unchanged, the preaching of full salvation will