

LEADERS WHO DO NOT LEAD.

Mr. Webster defines a leader as one who goes before to guide or show the way; or who "precedes or directs in some action, opinion, or movement." Also, "the front or foremost person in a file or advancing body."

Thus Jesus is the Leader of His people. The Good Shepherd leads His people in paths of righteousness. The Apostles were the leaders in the early Church and they led the Church both in promulgating the doctrines of Christianity and in the missionary and evangelistic activities of those early times. The Wesleys were leaders because they "went before to guide or show the way" out of a corrupt and dead formalism into the life and liberty of the children of God. The pioneer preachers were leaders because they helped largely in shaping the opinions, character, and activities of those frontier regions where their zeal so often led them. The pastors, evangelists, church and missionary officers are leaders because they are the "foremost persons" in "an advancing body."

The Church should be an advancing body, and this should extend to every branch of her organism. Wherever advancement ceases stagnation begins. The certain result is putrefaction and consequent separation, or the sure demise of the entire body. This history of the Church has always been written around her leaders. When she has had leaders who have blazed the way spiritual life has been vigorous and accessions from the world have been made. When leaders have faltered or have been corrupted, the Church has failed in her God-appointed mission.

There are those who should be leaders who are satisfied to be mere figureheads. Office seeking is chronic with some, the object apparently being the emoluments or distinction or commanding influence, rather than advancement and welfare of that body which they seek to lead. Such become blind leaders of the blind, the led and the leader both falling into the ditch of corrupt doctrine and practice.

Leaders in the Church or in any department of religious work and activity should be of divine appointment. We read of the Church in Antioch: "The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." These zealous men became the leaders in the missionary activities of the infant church because they "preceeded and directed in the movement." It is equally as essential that those upon whom the obligations of leadership have fallen should be real leaders. This applies to all branches of the work, educational, missionary, evangelistic, pastoral, Sunday School, or any other department of activity. No one should consent to accept official position who is unwilling or unfitted to assume the duties and activities of leadership. The judgment of brethren is sometimes in error; one's own judgment is sometimes mistaken; incapacity sometimes arises after the position of leadership has been conferred. In either case one should face the situation and refuse to hinder the progress of a righteous cause by failure in the leadership. When Asahel, one of the leaders of God's ancient people was slain by Abner and fell in the way, "as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood still." And so it has ever been. When our leaders fail the people stand still and the cause of God perishes.

WHAT WAS THE OBJECT OF YOUR SERMON?

When ministers get together on Monday morning it is a common thing to hear the question, "What was the subject of your sermon yesterday?" The question which we have used as a heading for this editorial is not so familiar, but it is more important. The object of a sermon is more important than its subject.

The first thing a minister should decide relative to next Sunday's preaching is the object of his sermon. He should ask and answer such questions as these: For what purpose should I go before my congregation next Sunday? What do I hope to accomplish by my sermons? What are the most pressing needs of my hearers? Do they need doctrine, counsel, comfort, inspiration, reproof? If so in what proportion? What, if any are the special or peculiar needs? To find the answers to such questions will require a great deal of pastoral visiting and a good many heart-to-heart talks. And, by the way, this is one of the pastor's best fields for study and investigation in the preparation of his sermons. Having fixed clearly in his mind the object which he hopes to accomplish by his sermon, it will not be difficult to find a suitable text. And the object and text will naturally suggest an appropriate subject, thus saving the preacher the trouble of finding one. In fact, if a minister has a good object and a good text for his sermon, it matters but little whether he has a subject at all or not, for it is of relatively small importance.—The Christian Conservator.

HARPOONS.

"Jamie," said an old whaler to his shipmate as they left a church, "what did ye think of the sermon, mon?" "Ah, weel, it was verra guid, but there was no harpoons in it."

Alas, alas, how many sermons preached now are like this one which the old Scotchman described. They have no bite, there is no lightning in them, nothing to stir or shake or awake the conscience nor feed the soul. Men can so preach, if they will, that everybody will know that they are at their proper business. God will so credential His messengers that, whether the people will hear or not, they will know that a prophet has spoken in their midst.—Sel.

Dr. Saunders says there is no doubt whatever about obtaining a good title to Balmoral Farm, and says that the agreement in our lease holds the owner hard and fast to sell to us as soon we are ready to buy. It is to our advantage to buy at as early a date as we can, so let us all help.

"Not 'What will the world say?' but 'What will the Lord say?' should be our rule."

We are well started into the new year of 1916. How essential it is that every one of our leaders be alive and alert and filled with the Holy Spirit and in the advance for the host calling the "Forward March!" Oh, ye leaders! in the name of the Eternal Jehovah and of His Son, Jesus Christ, and the holy Church of God, and of frail and perishing humanity, be alive to your responsibility and your opportunity! Be at your best for God and souls. Lead on your conquering hosts! Gird your loins for battle, for the battle is not yours, but God's. What history will be written about your name at the close of this good year of 1916? —Wesleyan Methodist.

HOW THE MINISTER'S QUESTION WAS ANSWERED.

The old minister closed the book and looked around the village church. "You are told," he said, "when you make a feast, to call to it not your rich neighbors, but the poor, the maimed, and the blind. Now none of you is going to set out a fine dinner or supper this week. Some of us never in our lives gave a great entertainment. Yet the order is to us. I want each of you, when you go home, to consider what God has given to you besides food with which to make a feast, and who are the poor folk whom you should bid to it."

People glanced, smiling at each other, for the good man was full of queer suggestions. But the idea remained in the minds of some of his hearers, making their Sunday afternoon uncomfortable.

It bothered Phil Dorrance as he sat alone in his room. He usually sat alone, except when at his meals. Phil was the blacksmith's son, whom his father, by dint of years of hard work and saving, had sent to college. He was grateful to his father, but he felt that his education had made a great gulf between him and the old man. His companions were his classmates. He had meant to spend this afternoon with some of them, discussing a paper he had written on the history of his native state. Instead, he took it downstairs to the kitchen, where his father and mother in their Sunday clothes sat nodding over the fire. How bare and empty their lives were—work and sleep!

"I want to read you something I have written," he said cheerfully.

They drew up their chairs, their eyes sparkling with pride and delight, and listened with a keen, shrewd intelligence that surprised him. They were able, too, to correct some mistakes that he had made, and to give him some facts new to him.

"I haven't had as pleasant a day for years. Phil," said the old man, when the paper was finished. His old mother said nothing, but kissed him, her eyes full of tears.

Squire Paton was known as the best story teller in the country. With strangers he was courteous, gay, and always ready with a joke. At home he was often moody and silent. That afternoon he told his wife some of his best stories, leaving her surprised and laughing, and amazed his stableman by speaking to him cheerfully and kindly.

"It's hardly fair," said the squire to himself, "to give all good things to strangers and leave the poor in your own household unfed."

And so the minister's question was answered.—The Youth's Companion.

You must hold intercourse with God or your soul will die. You must walk with God, or Satan will walk with you. You must grow in grace, or you will lose it; and you cannot do this but by appropriating to this object a due portion of your time and diligently employing suitable means.—Rev. R. Cecil.

"And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts if thou seek Him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever."—1 Chr. 28:9.