

A PREACHER'S MISTAKE

By H. C. Morrison, Pentecostal Herald

Even a preacher may sometimes be mistaken. I have made some mistakes myself. I see from a clipping sent to me that a Methodist preacher somewhere in Michigan, in his sermon on "Why People do not More Generally Attend Church," in which he no doubt gives some real reasons why church attendance is not more general, says that one cause of dwindling church attendance arises out of sermonizing on hell fire and damnation."

This brother is mistaken; there is almost no preaching on that subject. The subject of future punishment has largely disappeared from our Methodist pulpits, and if the subject were properly discussed it would increase, rather than decrease, church attendance. People have some sense and almost every one has a conscience, an inward voice that has something to say to its possessor.

I challenge this Methodist pastor to announce that on some Sunday morning or evening, he would preach a sermon on "What Jesus Christ taught with reference to the future state of the wicked." Such announcement would attract attention, increase his congregation and, if properly discussed in the spirit of the gospel, it will give little or no offense, but it will make people think, and they will talk the matter over. The sermon, if properly preached, will not be forgotten, but is almost sure to bear fruit.

Most people believe there is a future state; that the soul of man is immortal; even those in heathen darkness, believe that in that future state we must meet other rewards or punishment for good or bad conduct in this life. In heathen lands you will find temples, sacrifices, penance and prayers all looking to an effort to escape punishment and receive blessing in that future state of the soul's existence after the dissolution of the body.

After all, people have sense; most of them a good degree of intelligence, and quite capable of serious thought and intelligent reasoning. I have found this so among people who had very limited education. I have found it true among young people who, by some, were thought to be giddy, frivolous and almost incapable of serious thought. This is a mistake. With proper approach they will hear you thoughtfully and think with you seriously on almost any important question.

People are quite ready to listen to an intelligent man discuss any one of the many problems of human life, here and hereafter. They will hear you on the importance of properly balanced foods for good health, of the best methods of education and intellectual development. They will listen to you thoughtfully in a discussion of social questions, moral standards and high ideals. There is no reason why they should not give intelligent attention to a discussion of the future state of the soul, and the danger of a life of selfishness and sin, not only as it affects one here, but as it may be logically supposed to affect one hereafter.

I am of the opinion that one of the needs of our time is earnest preaching on the future state of the impenitent wicked. There need be no storming or ranting, or shaking of fists or stamping of feet; any preacher of even moderate education and good common sense ought to be able to logically, clearly, kindly,

though earnestly, present to a congregation the plain teachings of the Scriptures on this subject. He should be careful not to arouse resentment, but to produce serious reflection that will awaken uneasiness, conviction for sin, and lead to repentance not to be repented of.

I am firmly of the opinion—and these opinions rest upon reasonable basis—that if every Methodist preacher, yea, every Protestant preacher in these United States would preach a series of four sermons on the teachings of Christ with reference to the future state of the wicked, it would produce profound thinking. I believe it would have a national effect for good, and awaken godly fear and reverence, put a check to wickedness and lead multitudes to repentance and saving faith in Christ. It is not improbable that some preachers are a bit, shall we say, cowardly, or afraid to present some serious and very important subjects to their people.

For fifty-three years I have had wide experience as a preacher from some of the greatest city churches to brush arbors in the backwoods, and have found it safe to trust the intelligence, sincerity, and general good will of the people toward a preacher. If you have a Bible theme they are willing to listen thoughtfully to its presentation, provided the people are convinced that the preacher is fairly well posted on his subject; in a word, if he knows what he is talking about, and that he is deeply concerned for their welfare, they will give him a patient, thoughtful and appreciative hearing.

The people know that life is of short duration, and very uncertain. The preacher is employed and supported to serve them as best he may in preparing them for that which is best for them in this world and that which is to come. Men who are well prepared for eternity are best prepared for time. The preacher of the gospel is under highest obligation to the people to warn them faithfully with reference to the future state of the wicked, and with this warning, to bring the good news that, in Christ Jesus, there is ample provision for the salvation of sinful men; that no one need be lost, but that it is the privilege of every one, here and now, to be saved from sin and its fearful consequences. —H. C. Morrison, in Pentecostal Herald.

YOUNG CONVERTS AND ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION

A. W. Orwig

The book of discipline of the church of which I am a member very definitely teaches that all Christians should be urged to seek the experience in question. It declares that "it is every Christian's bounden duty to strive thereafter; for Christ and all his apostles exhort thereto." That certainly includes young Christians. Again, the same book says: "Let us seriously and explicitly admonish all believers to strive for Christian perfection." Unquestionably the word "us" applies chiefly to preachers. Thus we see that the duty of preachers is as plainly taught as is the privilege and need of all converted persons, regardless of age.

Some time ago a man said to me: "If the doctrine of holiness or entire sanctification had been preached to me immediately after my conversion, I would have been saved

many heartaches, and would have made far greater progress in the Christian life." After one has become a child of God, what doctrine is more important for him to know than that he may be saved from all indwelling or original sin? Or, as expressed by the apostle Paul, that one may be wholly sanctified. And certainly the experience is of unspeakable importance.

To me it appears that there can be no better time than in one's "first love" to hear about his full privilege in Christ Jesus. And unquestionably it is the preacher's duty to explain the doctrine in its various aspects, and not to be too dilatory in urging the seeking of the priceless boon of full sanctification or perfect love.

Let us now have the testimony of a few prominent men concerning the best time to encourage Christians to press forward into the grace of entire sanctification. The Rev. John Wesley constantly urged young converts, whether youth or older persons, to seek holiness in its higher stages. And he addressed the earlier Methodist preachers thus: "Let all our preachers make it a point, as soon as any are justified, to remind them to go right on to entire sanctification."

Bishop Asbury, the first American bishop, wrote to every one of the preachers of his church "Let every prayer, every hymn and sermon be seasoned with this wholesome and holy doctrine." Another eminent preacher wrote: "The favorable time to secure holiness is soon after the soul is assured of pardon." Another distinguished preacher of the gospel, referring to the most suitable time to seek the experience under consideration, says: "After real justification is the most preferable period for persons to seek entire sanctification. They have then the simplicity of children and are fervent in spirit. But if we suffer this fervor to subside, we shall find it hard to bring them again to this point." The truthfulness of this declaration is quite apparent from the fact of the many who grow cold and worldly in less than a year after professed conversion.

I once heard of a classleader who said that every member of his class either enjoyed holiness or was seeking it, both the older Christians and the new converts. Would to God there were more such classleaders! And should not all preachers endeavor so to instruct their people on this Bible doctrine of heart purity as to stimulate the most earnest hunger and thirst for the fulfillment of Christ's declaration of our being "filled?" It is to be deplored that some manifest far too little interest in the matter.

To all who become Christians is addressed the command of "perfecting holiness in the fear of God." And for all young converts the apostle prays, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly," as also for all others who have not yet entered that state of grace. But no matter how far we have gone in the divine life, to all of us it must be a going on "from glory to glory" until we reach the glory world on high.—Christian Witness.

A man ought to live so close to God, have enough old time religion, and be such a blessing in his home, his church, his town and community, that his undertaker would weep and mourn when he is gone, and say, "O God, why couldn't you let him live longer? Let me live like he lived and die as he died!"—Christian Witness.