

Seek Divine Approval

A call to Preparation for the Ministry

Bishop C. V. Fairbarin

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth . . . That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." "Let no man despise thy youth," "Study," "Do thy utmost," "Do your best," "Give diligence"; the various translations drive home the thought; "Prepare thyself to make full proof of thy ministry."

God wants and uses prepared men. If they are not "equipped for His work" when He gets them, He lets the work wait while He takes time to equip them. John the Baptist had his time of brooding, studying, and praying in the deserts. Jesus Himself went through the silent years at Nazareth. The Apostles had their years with the greatest teacher of the ages, hearing His words, seeing His works, marking His ways, imbibing His spirit, taking on His attitudes and finally at Pentecost being filled with His Holy Spirit before He released them to their great work.

Frequently God is more in charge than men dream, even when they think they are managing their own affairs. Plans of their own designing may be secretly conceived by that "destiny which shapes our ends." Tarsus was a free Roman city in Grecian Cilicia. A baby born there was named Saul. Very likely his early education was had under a Pharisean rabbi. He took to religion and philosophy. Possibly he was at Tarsus. Then he began to consider the rabbinate. He elected to study theology under Dr. Gamaliel in Jerusalem. He graduated. It is believed by some that his hopes were realized in his election as rabbi of the Hellenist Synagogue in Jerusalem. But he met Stephen. Then he met Christ on the Damascus road. Presently the Lord said to Ananias: "Go thy way; . . . behold he prayeth . . . He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel."

If God's workman is not "thoroughly furnished unto all good works," he is going to experience some very embarrassing moments. The test comes, and if he has had opportunity to make adequate preparation, and has failed to do so, he needs to be ashamed. Those looking on, expecting some degree of adequacy, but observing his lack of preparation, will despise, not so much his youthfulness, as his inexperience as a novice. Some ingenious souls with native ingenuity get by with a minimum of shamefacedness; but their name is not Legion. Mr. Wesley averred, it is said, that the man who knew of a coming demand upon him, yet did not prepare against it, sinned by such negligence.

"But what you suggest takes time!" says someone. "Why, I'd be years getting ready! Meanwhile lost men are dying; I must get to the work!"

It takes skill, energy, will power and time to keep the scythe on the grindstone, but the grain cleanly cut off and neatly laid in swath is better than pulled out by a dull blade and left mangled and tangled in untidy rows. Christ held in abeyance the whole plan for world evangelization while His disciples went to Pentecost to be better equipped for the task that lay ahead of them.

Brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord by his parents, and further schooled in the colleges of Egypt, Moses spent forty years preparing for His life's work. Irked by inactivity he got in a hurry and slew the Egyptian. So forty more years had to be spent herding sheep before he got his commission at the burning bush. "He that believeth (hath confidence in the necessity, certainty and security of Divine guidance) shall not make haste."

We have contended that the Holy Spirit indwelling a man and anointing his every faculty for service is fully sufficient. In a sense this is so. But we have been so determined that all must be done by the Spirit, I fear we have held back some of the factors it is God's pleasure to use. God wills to use human instrumentality. And man has something to do with getting every bit of his tripartite being, spirit and soul and body, into the very best condition, and keeping it so. Jesus growing up "was subject unto" Mary and Joseph, and "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." Then you and I must plan for, work for, and expect growth in and of all our powers. Birds are hatched nest-builders by instinct; the first nest is as perfect as the last. Men are born with latent possibilities, but not preachers by instinct, nor ministers by instinct; their work is not as skillful, and thorough, and effective at the first, as in later years.

AND WHY NOT PREPARE FOR THE MINISTRY? WHY NOT DESIRE AND PURPOSE AND DO OUR UTMOST TO BE VESSELS MOST MEET FOR THE MASTER'S USE? We seek the most skilled surgeon for the delicate operation. We may desire heart and intelligent sympathy but we demand skill and experience. We want the skilled mechanic, not a novice, to work on the new car. We want the skilled carpenter, not the "saw-and-jackknife" man, to do the fine woodwork in the new house. When the old home church was renovated, no one dreamed of calling in Jack Splosh, who had recently daubed his house with barn-red paint; no, they called in an experienced church decorator. Yet when it came to calling a pastor, some preferred the man of small talents and a little preparation to stand behind the sacred desk. Fortunately the man they got enjoyed good religion, so he "got by." And I would rather have the man with good religion and little college, than one with college degrees but lacking good religion; for, after all, the promise was of "power . . . when the Holy Ghost is come" to make the disciples, not preachers about Me, but witnesses "unto me." Yet acknowledging that, let it be said: While the man who enjoys good religion may make an excellent soul-winner—and he could do that as a layman—another man with the same good religion, but taught and trained in the things of God, the philosophies of the ages, the marvels of the universe, God's wonderful dealings with races and nations in history, the mechanics of the ministry, the biographies of eminently successful ministers, and the most successful methods used in pursuit of the calling—such a man, so trained, may not only be as great and successful a soul-winner, but will make by far the more successful pastor and minister.—American Holiness Journal.

"We can trust both the present and the future to Him whose knowledge is perfect and whose discipline is love."

Tracts and Their Uses

By TOM M. OLSON

"In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good" (Ecclesiastes 11:6).

Even in my unsaved days, tracts interested me; and since the Lord apprehended me, tracts intrigue me.

It is my contention that anyone may propagate the Gospel of Christ by tract distribution; a Christian who does not habitually use sound, scriptural tracts is constantly losing wonderful opportunities of increasing his usefulness toward man and his fruitfulness toward God.

Tracts can be tactfully given to fellow workers or travelers, they can be enclosed in letters and bills, they can be left on counters, seats and windows. They can be dropped from automobiles, streetcars and trains—also from boats, if first placed in waterproof containers.

Tracts can be read to the blind, ill and dying; in fact, to all classes of humanity. They can be displayed in show windows and on bulletin boards. They can be reproduced in newspapers, magazines and books. The messages in tracts can be repeated in conversations, speeches and sermons. Tracts can be translated and printed in all languages and dialects.

Do you know a less expensive method of spreading the Gospel of Christ than tract distribution? (Many tracts are absolutely free—others can be had for but a few cents per hundred copies). Do you know of a surer way of "sowing bountifully" and "reaping bountifully"?

The Lord graciously saved me shortly after I entered my teens. I distributed tracts in boyish fashion then, but craved and prayed for the privilege of handing out a million tracts in my life time. (By distributing a thousand tracts each week, one can place a million tracts in twenty years!)

After giving myself to the Lord for "full-time service," it was my happy privilege to work many towns from door to door, placing up to 500 tracts per day—hence my yearning to distribute a million tracts with my own hands was soon realized, for which I heartily praise the Lord.

Another desire of my heart was the privilege of writing tracts, and still another to supply workers with free tracts. These desires are being fulfilled in Ephesians 3:20 fashion; for tracts have been written by the score and tracts by the million have been given to workers throughout the world. Praise His Name!

There are those who object to tract work because they have seen tracts on sidewalks which were discarded by the recipients. True, some of the tracts distributed may be wasted, but the work is abundantly worth while even making that allowance (Luke 8:5-8).

When tracts are printed in very large quantities, an attractive two-page tract can often be produced at the rate of twenty-five for one cent, and a four-page tract at a dozen for a cent. At that rate one must see from a dozen to twenty-five tracts thrown away before the thought of wasting one cent could be entertained.

On the other hand, seeing a tract on the sidewalk by no means proves it wasted. A man wrote from Newark, N. Y., saying he was

(Continued on Page 8)