

"Lord Lay Some Soul Upon My Heart"

By Rev. Ben Smith, Victoria, B. C., Canada

The pulse of every pastor must throb, his burden be intensified, as he contemplates the world situation today. The whole world is still anguished with sorrow as it endeavors to emerge from the darkest, most savage hour in all its history. A great statesman recently said, "Democracies, while they may view world violence with horror, have greater moral troubles." Which means, that on what we have known as the Home Front the pastor faces a tremendous challenge. The Christian pastor, under God, is the key man to bring about a great moral and spiritual awakening. He cannot be elbowed out of his place; God put him there. He is God's ambassador extraordinary; most stupendous is the commission; he is charged with a message that must be proclaimed from the housetops with all the urgency of a King's command. What a glorious task—the most worthwhile task in all the world. Daniel Webster said, "If we work upon marble, it will perish; if we work upon brass, time will efface it; if we rear temples, they will crumble to dust; but if we work upon immortal souls, we engrave upon these tablets something which will brighten all eternity." But the writer in the Holy Word magnifies the work in the most exalted language: "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Daniel 12:3. Ours is not to preach so many sermons, marry the living and bury the dead, but pre-eminently to be soul-winners.

Wesley said to his pastors: "Let us all be men of one business, we live only for this, to save our own souls and the souls of those who hear us." Brethren, remember, you were not furnished with STOCK-IN-TRADE to let it lie on your shelves; the success of God's business depends upon your steady TURN-OVER. We must not HIBERNATE, STALEMATE, CRYSTALIZE NOR FOSSILIZE, BUT MOBILIZE AND EVANGELIZE. It costs something to be a soul-winner. To assure a harvesting of souls worthy of the finest traditions of Methodism, to experience the immeasurable joy of winning souls for Christ, we must be willing to sacrifice. "SELF must be crucified between TWO THIEVES, Delay and Compromise, the thieves of Time and Victory." Without sacrifice, we are on the way out as far as winning souls is concerned. In the words of Dr. Jowett, "When we cease to bleed we cease to bless." In a letter to Gypsy Smith, a London Christian worker said, "I want you to come and speak to a meeting. It is a small meeting and will take nothing out of you." "I cannot come," replied the great evangelist; "and it would be of no use if I did. That which takes nothing out of me will do nobody any good." The great Apostle paid the price of Spiritual power in sacrifice; "What things were gain to me, these I counted loss for Christ . . . Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might . . . testify the gospel of the grace of God." David Brainerd said, "I cared not where or how I lived, or what hardships I went through, so that I could GAIN SOULS TO CHRIST. While I was asleep, I dreamed of these things; and when I waked, the first thing I thought of was this great work."

One has said, "A pessimist is one who sees

a difficulty in every opportunity, and an optimist is one who sees an opportunity in every difficulty." We must carry into our ministry a spirit of invincible optimism; the pulpit is no place for a wailing pessimist. Ours is a heartening, glorious message of freedom, victory and triumph; "we are more than conquerors." If I am to win souls, then I must be a man with a gospel message freighted with life and power. My preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom," said Paul, "but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." I fear that too often we devote our energies to minor issues and lose sight of the transcendent glories of the incomparable task of saving souls. O, to have it said of us, as a Scottish woman said of Robert McCheyne, "He preached as if he was dyin, a'most to have ye converted." It was said of Whitefield, "From the time he began, as a lad, to preach to the very hour of his death, he knew no abatement of passion. To the end of that remarkable career, his soul was a furnace of burning zeal for the salvation of men." The great need of the hour is for a quickened, burdened, impassioned, blazing, fire-baptized, unctioned, vitalized ministry. O God, shake us loose! We have worked our old treadmill program long enough. O God, implant in our hearts a burning passion for souls, until it sends us forth inviting, pleading, praying, exhorting, witnessing, digging our way through the debris and wreckage of shattered lives; for underneath, we shall find precious souls. The sermon may win some, but in thousands of cases it is only the PERSONAL TOUCH that wins. The Master Soul-Winner did not save His for crowds only; He preached them to the few, the ones and the twos. Colonel Brengle led a colored porter to Christ one night. Said he afterwards, "A ton of gold would not have made me so joyful." A holy excitement, that falls not short of making one shouting happy, is realized when a soul is won for Christ. Nothing will so replenish the life of our meetings, put fire into our own souls, make prayer-meetings veritable Upper Rooms, and turn testimony meetings into a flaming witnessing, as will a few souls won for Christ.

What the Church needs is not more program, organization, entertainers, but the breath and fire of the Holy Ghost. We need the "drenchings of Supernatural Vitality." Let us live under the anointing of the Holy Spirit and let us NOT tarry for the aid of a professional evangelist, but, under God, realize the greatness of our high and holy calling. EVERY PASTOR HIMSELF A SOUL WINNER.

"Ablaze for Christ! a flame of fire for Him!
Ablaze for Christ! for Jesus, souls to win;
A life redeemed, a life of holiness unto Him!
A life on fire for God and souls—
Ablaze for Christ!"

—American Holiness Journal

"It is my deep conviction, and I say it again and again, that if the Church of Christ were what she ought to be, twenty years would not pass away till the message of the Cross would be uttered in the ears of every living man."—Simeon H. Calhoun.

Talkativeness

By George Watson

Talkativeness is utterly ruinous to deep spirituality. The very life of your spirit passes out in your speech, and hence, all superfluous talk is a waste of vital forces of the heart. In fruit-growing, it often happens that excessive blossoming prevents a good crop, and often prevents fruit altogether and so by much loquacity, the soul runs wild in word-blossom, and bears no fruit. I am not speaking of sinners, nor of legitimate testimony for Jesus, but of that incessant loquacity of spiritual persons, of the professors of purifying grace. It is one of the greatest hindrances to deep, solid union with God. Notice how people will tell the same thing over and over, how insignificant trifles are magnified by a world of words, how things that should be buried are dragged out into gossip, how a worthless non-essential is argued and disputed; how the solemn deep things of the Holy Spirit are talked of in a light rattling manner, until one who has the real baptism of divine silence in his heart, feels he must unceremoniously tear himself away to some lonely room . . . , where one can gather up the fragments of his mind, and rest in God. Not only do we need cleansing from sin, but our natural human spirit needs a radical death to its noise and activity and wordiness. See the evil effects of so much talk.

First, it dissipates the spiritual power. The thought and feelings of the soul are like powder and steam—the more they are condensed the greater their power. The steam that, if properly compressed, would drive a train forty miles an hour, if allowed too much expanse would not move it an inch; and so the true unction of the heart, if expressed in a few Holy Ghost selected words will sink into minds to remain for ever, but if dissipated in any rambling conversation, is likely to be of no profit.

Secondly, it is a waste of time. If the hours spent in useless conversation were spent in secret prayer, or deep reading, we would soon reach a region of soul-life and divine peace beyond our present dreams.

Thirdly, loquacity will inevitably lead to saying unwise or unprofitable things. In religious conversation we soon churn up all the cream our souls have in them, and the rest of our talk is pale skim milk, till we get alone with God and feed on His green pasture until the cream rises again. The Holy Spirit warns us that "in the multitude of words there lacketh not sin." It is impossible for even the best of saints to talk beyond a certain point without saying something unkind, or severe, or foolish, or erroneous. We must settle this personally.

If others are noisy and gabby, I must determine to live in constant quietness and humility of heart; I must guard my speech as a sentinel does a fortress, and with all respect for others, I must many times cease from conversation or withdraw from company to enter into deep communion with my precious Lord. The cure for loquacity must be from within, sometimes by an interior furnace of suffering that burns out the excessive effervescence of the mind, by an overmastering revelation to the soul of the awful majesty of God and eternity, which puts an everlasting hush upon the natural faculties. To walk in the Spirit we must avoid talking for talk sake or merely to entertain. To speak effectively, we must speak in God's appointed time, and in harmony with the indwelling Holy Spirit.—World Conquest.