

God-Made Preachers

By Rev. H. S. Dow

"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (II Cor. 3:5-6).

We sometimes hear one person commending another for his success in life, and he will say, "He is a self-made man," meaning of course, that by his own zeal and efforts he had succeeded in his profession, or calling, which doubtless was true. But successful ministers of the New Testament are not self-made. We know that Paul wrote Timothy, to "study to show (himself) approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15). It is certainly true, that if men would be successful ministers of the gospel, they must be students of the word of God, as well as of other subjects which will assist them in their work. Dr. Jowett's advice to young preachers is, "Study as if success depends wholly on you, and pray as if it depends wholly upon God."

We have met a few men who, as far as we could see, seemed to be qualified to be preachers of the gospel; they were godly men, intelligent, perhaps above the ordinary, students of good things, fluent speakers, etc., but who said they had no conviction that they ought to preach. There are many men who are born with special gifts or natural talents, which are essential to the preacher, but that does not make them successful preachers, for preachers of the gospel are not born, they are made. See the text. Paul said, "God hath Made us."

They are made first, by the saving grace of God being applied to their hearts, making them new creatures in Christ Jesus.

Second, a gospel preacher is made by being called of God to that special work. We feel that many good men make a very grave mistake right here. Because they have a desire to do good, in seeing souls saved, which every born again Christian should have, they take that desire as a call from God to preach; and yet, they lack that intense conviction of soul and mind which says you **MUST** preach the gospel, or displease God, and perhaps be lost. The Apostle expressed that conviction in these words: "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of, for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel" (I Cor. 9:16).

Yes, God puts a special anointing upon the man whom He calls to preach, an inspiration which the preacher enjoys, when he attempts to preach the word; a special freedom, which his hearers often recognize, which convicts the unsaved, and feeds and blesses the hearts of the saints. Someone has called the preacher, the key man of the church. The apostle Paul emphasized the influence of preaching. He wrote to the Corinthians, "So we preach, and so ye believe."

To make the preaching of the gospel more effective, Jesus will baptize His preachers with the Holy Spirit. Of course, the baptism with the Holy Spirit is provided for all regenerated, unsanctified, children of God. John the Baptist told the people who were baptized of him in Jordan confessing their sins, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that

cometh after me is mightier than I . . . He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and fire." (Matt. 3:11).

After our Lord had commanded His disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel, He also told them "that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of me . . . For ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts 1:4, 5).

When Jesus said, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" He was doubtless referring to the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, when the 120 were all filled with the Holy Spirit.

We have met several preachers who said that they had preached the gospel several months or years before they had been baptized with the Holy Spirit, in sanctifying power, but after they had received that experience they were very much more successful.

The apostle emphasizes the need of the Holy Spirit in preaching, in the words of our text: "God has made us able ministers . . . not of the letter but of the spirit, for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." We understand by this, how vain it is for us to preach, even the Word without the special aid, inspiration and leading of the Holy Spirit. The letter killeth. Men may preach many things that are good in themselves, even portions of scripture, but unless they are inspired by the Holy Spirit "the letter killeth." Peter also commends them who have preached the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

Another reason that preachers should be baptized with the Holy Spirit is because that experience makes them witnesses to the power of Jesus. It is not enough for us to be heralds of the gospel. We must be witnesses as well. Jesus said, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me." Paul said God called him to be a witness as well as a preacher.

It is possible for men to embrace the theory of sanctification and holiness, without receiving the experience in their hearts, and such men never become witnesses to that gracious work of grace, although they may refer to the grace of holiness sometimes in their preaching.

Some people think that preachers are made in schools, so without depending on a special call from God, the prospective preacher goes away to college or a university, or an institution of learning, and studies theology, homiletics, sacred rhetoric, oratory, etc., etc., and after several years of training he comes home with a head full of knowledge, not necessarily of the Bible. He may know more about modern sports than he does about the word of God, but he has studied for the ministry, they say, so he is called, or is sent to one of these modern worldly-minded churches, where not many of the members believe in or want vital salvation and, of course, they don't get much of that from him, because he has not much to give.

Hence the reason for so many so-called churches, with hundreds of adherents who know not God. Education obtained for the glory of God is good indeed for the preacher, but there is absolutely no substitute that the preacher can acquire, or use in the work of God and preaching of the gospel, in place of the Holy Spirit. If we establish and build up the work of holiness in our churches, we must pray mightily to God until He comes and works in



PROSPECTS FOR 1954-55

Already we are looking forward to the opening of a new school year in the Fall. Plans must be made, prospective students contacted, and the ground work laid for another year's enterprise.

Our Pastors can assist us greatly in this regard. We suggest that an effort be made to discover how many young people in your congregation are considering the possibility of attending Bethany, then send this list to The Registrar, Box 1100, Yarmouth, N. S.

REPORT ON REVIVAL

The last week of January was "Revival Week" at the school. For many weeks earnest prayer had been offered for the spiritual needs represented on our campus. Rev. B. C. Cochran delivered penetrating truth under the anointing of the Spirit, with the result that every unsaved student responded to the call of God. We appreciate the leadership of our pastor, Rev. F. A. Watson, whose effective ministry has contributed much to the spiritual life of the college family.

We trust that the remaining months of the school year will be marked by a deepening sense of God's presence. Pray for Bethany and for those who leave this year for service in His Harvest.

LEARNING CHRIST

May I be gentle in all the events of life, in disappointments, in the thoughtlessness of others, in the sincerity of those on whom I relied.

Let me put self aside to think of the happiness of others, to hide my little pains and heartaches, so that I may be the only one to suffer from them.

Teach me to profit by the sufferings that come across my path.

Let me use it that it may mellow me, not harden nor embitter me, that it may make me patient, not irritable, that it may make me broad in my forgiveness, not narrow, haughty, and overbearing.

May no one be less good for having come in under my influence; no one less pure, less true, less kind, less noble for having been a fellow traveler in our journey toward eternal life.

As I go my rounds from one distraction to another, let me whisper from time to time a word of love to Thee. May my life be lived in the supernatural, full of power, of good, and strong in the purpose of sanctity.—Unknown.

our midst. We must depend upon him to guide us in selecting our messages, and to inspire us with that anointing which makes the preaching reach the hearts of the hearers. If we don't have the Holy Spirit in our preaching, and in our churches, we will become as formal, lukewarm and dead as others. Let us pray.