

THE LABORER IS WORTHY . . .

That is, every laborer is worthy of his hire except the preacher. Jesus did not put in the "except" clause, but we often do.

The Old Testament farmer was forbidden to muzzle the ox who trampled out (threshed) the grain. The ox was entitled to a mouthful of grain now and then while he tramped.

While the Bible is clear that those who refuse to work are not entitled to eat, it is just as insistent that those who work be properly paid.

Jesus said, "The workman is worthy of his meat," not of charity but of right. And Paul taught, that "they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

Charles G. Finney, the great evangelist of the past century put it this way. "As I have gone from place to place laboring in revivals, I have always found that churches were blessed in proportion to their liberality. Where they have manifested a disposition to support the gospel, and to pour their substance liberally into the treasury of the Lord, they have been blessed both in spiritual and in temporal things. But where they have been parsimonious, and let the preacher preach for them for little or nothing, these churches have been cursed instead of blessed. As a general thing, in revivals of religion, I have found it true that young converts are most inclined to join those churches which are most liberal in making efforts to support the gospel." To which we might add, young preachers are inclined to do the same.

God's business operates on sacrificial giving, but it does not operate on cheap things—either cheap materials or cheap labor. The best materials and workmanship went into the building of the tabernacle and temple. True, Jesus was born in a manger but that is no argument why the church should worship in a barn.

"The Problem of the Underpaid Pastor" was examined with care in **Christianity Today** (September 30). Not one pastor in a hundred receives a salary of \$10,000 a year. That cannot be said of our laymen, particularly when it is remembered that the average pastor's wife is a full-time church employee without salary, or without even baby-sitting allowance.

Why are preachers' salaries so low? Because, as **Christianity Today** tells it, their "salaries are fixed by boards of local churches." (There is one exception: in the Seventh-day Adventist Church most ordained ministers draw a salary of \$9,365 plus a housing allowance.) And most church boards are really scared (I think this is not too strong) to pay the pastor a realistic salary, in other words, the kind of salary they themselves would like to receive in a top-notch supervisory job. "Thus the prosperous laity is telling the pastor, in effect, that he is not fully worthy of his hire. Fewer than one out of five ministers report that they get an annual raise, and fewer than two out of five report receiving even an annual salary review."

Ross P. Scherer, church management expert, suggests that "probably no other institution leaves the compensation of its professionals to such a sporadic, quixotic, and laissez-faire system of patronage."

I am aware that many of our churches are small—unrealistically small in this day, it would seem—and small churches cannot pay salaries of \$5,000 to \$10,000 a year. But some of our big churches are keeping the

pastor's salary as low as they can maintain it. The stewards hope that some fringe benefits will make up for the cash they do not pay.

Small laymen make small preachers. And small preachers make small churches.

No God-called preacher is going to set his price and demand an exorbitant salary. But a God-called and capable preacher is worthy of a salary equal to that of a foreman in the factory operating in your town. And for a church to offer a superior pastor an inferior salary is insulting to God and to the pastor.

I am thinking of a church that prospered year after year, in attendance, in Sunday school, in membership, and in cash offerings. Yet over a period of years the pastor was not offered a raise in salary. He did not request a raise, but certainly he would have been heartened to have received even a modest increase in salary. Perhaps later the Board of Stewards thought of what they might have done.

It seems that we raise salaries only when we have to. We don't really appreciate our college professors now more than before but we are paying them perhaps five times more than we did twenty years ago. (This is because of the insistence of our Accrediting Associations.) Think what a similar increase would have done for our pastors in the past twenty years. Perhaps we would not have lost to other denominations some of our fine young men, who did not really desert our doctrines but who did protest our lack of vision. If we manifested greater interest in bettering our salaries and our programs, we would produce better pastors and greater churches.

I do not mean that good salaries can produce or guarantee good preachers. Nothing could be less true, as a generality. High wages, of themselves, do not make workmen more conscientious and better skilled. But superior workmen are benefited by suitable remuneration in two ways. First, they have a feeling of fair treatment and they try harder to do better. Second, when properly paid, preachers have more time and means to do the work they are called to do—visit, pray, and preach.

Not many churches need to repent for paying their pastor or pastors too much!

NEWS FROM MARYSVILLE

The Marysville Church is undergoing a major interior renovation program.

A renovation committee was appointed by the church and several meetings followed.

The first motion made was that all phases of the work be a matter of prayer.

The \$20,000.00 renovation program includes raising the roof of the classroom wing and adding a second floor. Providing seven good size classrooms.

The plans for the Nave include changing the seating about so they will face the south wing.

The south wing presently the coat room and overflow area will now be the Chancel area. The Chancel will be finished in vinyl wall fabric for the walls with oak strips.

The railings, choir seats, pulpit and trimmings will be finished in oak.

The old choir room will now become the entrance, and the existing entrance blocked off completely.

The work is being done by Anchor Const. on a cost plus basis, which will enable church members to pitch in and do much of the work cleaning up, panelling walls, painting, laying floor tile ourselves. This will give us the atmosphere of being involved and feeling useful as well as save money.

Any job this size and on a cost plus basis will require careful going and a great deal of prayer support.

Your roving renovator Sam Robinson.

ASK A QUESTION?

QUESTION: *If one is decently dressed, is it sinful to swim at a public bathing place?*

ANSWER: In answering your question I can only give you my personal opinion on the matter. I suppose I am old fashioned and may be just a little out of date, but I have always had the feeling that a modest Christian girl or woman would not want to unduly expose her body. Christian people have some standards of conduct that the world will not accept.

I am in sympathy with our young people of today and realize they are under terrific pressure from the world. Many of them don't want to be considered a "square" or an "odd ball," and so feel that there are some things they must do if they are to be popular with the crowd. However, we must recognize that if we are going to be real Christians and have our testimony count for Christ, there are some things we will have to say "No" to.

Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

Daniel refused to eat the king's meat. It made him very unpopular with the crowd but it was very pleasing to the Lord. The crowd that looked upon him as an odd ball died and passed into oblivion, but the name of Daniel still lives because he had some convictions and stood by them.

If you expect to amount to anything in this world or in the Kingdom of God you will have to have the courage to be different.

The question you will have to answer is, "Do I want to be like the world, or do I want to be known as a Christ-like person?" When you answer this question you will have the answer to the one you asked me.

Dr. John Church.

BUDGETS LAGGING

The Youth Treasurer reports that funds are dribbling in. Let's not forget to pay our budgets. Send monies to:

Miss Beth Cann,
458 Rothesay Ave.,
Saint John, N. B.

DEBT REDUCTION SUNDAY JANUARY 22nd

Let every wage earner contribute at least one dollar to denominational needs.

Raised last year\$1500.00
Goal for this year\$2000.00

N. E. TRAFTON,
Treasurer.