

# The PROJECTOR

*"Projecting the Light of the Word of God on the Issues of the Day"*

DR. DAYTON HOBBS, Editor

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## THE PUBLIC INVITATION: ITS USE AND ABUSE

*(Excerpts from an article by Jon Trainer, Assistant Pastor,  
Calvary Bible Church, Columbus, Ohio)*

### THE MISUSE OF THE PUBLIC INVITATION

There are a host of ethical problems which plague the pastor and the Christian worker: poor exegesis, distortion of the truth, spiritualizing the text, favoring one of several interpretations of a text, offering simple solutions to complex problems, exaggerating, acting as an authority when we are not, avoiding hot topics, and preaching what we fail to practice, to name a few. There must be added to this list unethical manipulation in the postsermon invitation.

One humorous example of unethical manipulation occurs in the preaching of George Whitefield. He would ask a man to hide in a clump of bushes while he expounded I Corinthians 15:52. At a particular point in Whitefield's sermon, he would begin to sound blasts on a trumpet. Of course the verse refers to the sounding of the last trump at Christ's return. Whitefield would look up at the sky and shout, "Stop Gabriel, stop!" The trumpet would continue playing. "No Gabriel, stop playing, there are people here that are not ready, stop Gabriel, stop!" The hysterical crowd would begin to cry out for salvation!

The line between rational persuasion, genuine religious emotional appeal, and manipulation is a fine one. Raymond MacLoughland in *The Ethics of Persuasive Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House), defines manipulation as:

persuasion that is deliberately not in the best interest of the individual involved, but is deceptively intended for the advantage of the persuader; or that attempts to get people to do something they would not do if they had the facts.

The reason we have so many inactive religious converts is that pastors have persuaded people to become nominal Christians instead of genuine religious converts. They have not truly counted the cost of being a Christian because the preacher has not presented all the facts

of the gospel.

The following list is a representation of several abuses related to the public invitation that have been compiled from various sources; it is designed to cause those giving public invitations to consider seriously their use of this tool.

1. The use of conversion statistics for personal promotion implies a scalp gathering mentality that is "for the advantage of the persuader." There is never an occasion in Scripture when the apostles use the outward results of their ministry to verify the legitimacy of their call or ability.

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## THE APOSTASY OF THE VISIBLE CHURCH

Dr. Dayton Hobbs (Part Four)

### LAWLESSNESS

The Bible speaks about the *mystery of iniquity* (II Thess. 2:7). Let us understand what that phrase means. The word *mystery* simply means a secret. God knows about it, but it cannot be known to man until God reveals it. It is not a secret, once it is revealed, to those who discern what God is saying. To the spiritual man who understands the Scripture, this *mystery of iniquity* is not a secret. He can see and understand this condition in the church, but it is a secret to those who have rejected truth. *They received not the love of the truth that they might be saved.* (II Thess. 2:10). You see, you have to love the truth in order to be saved. The truth is that you are a sinner.

The truth is that you are lost. The truth is that you need Jesus Christ as your Saviour. That's the truth. Now if you receive that love, then you follow that path. You say, "Yes I am a sinner. Yes, I do need to be saved. Yes, the blood of Jesus is the only thing that can cleanse me from sin. Oh, God have mercy on me a sinner, and save me for Jesus sake." If that takes place in your life, then you have the power that goes with the form, not just a form of godliness without the power. You have the power that goes with being a Christian. You have the Holy Spirit living within, but today the condition of the church is one of great apostasy, of great form, of great profession of godliness but lacking the truth.

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## EDITOR'S DESK

Recently, one of the monthly national news magazines carried a picture of President-Elect Clinton riding a white horse. Obviously the next personage the Scriptures present to us as riding a white horse is the Anti-Christ himself. This by no means indicates that Clinton is the Anti-Christ, but I do believe the news magazine seems to have caught the flavor of the times.

The next event upon God's calendar is the rapture of the Church, which is Christ's body, caught up to meet Him in the clouds and so ever to be with the Lord. Old Testament prophesy is not being fulfilled in the Church Age, as the heavens are silent. God the Father said everything He has to say to this Christ-rejecting world when He spoke in His Only Begotten Son; anything He were to say in this age of grace would of necessity be repetition, for the Father's final Word. His final message to man was spoken in Jesus Christ.

Although Old Testament prophecy concerning Israel is not being fulfilled in the Church dispensation, that is not to say that the stage is not being set for the last prophetic drama of the ages. We are to discuss the times, being obviously aware of the events of our time, seeing in them the preparation of nations and people for the Lord's return in power to take vengeance on His enemies and establish His world government of righteousness and peace.

In Rev. 6:2, Anti-Christ is seen on his counterfeit white horse having a bow, a

crowns, and a commission to conquer. No arrow is in the bow, which speaks of conquest in the name of peace and for the welfare of those being conquered. Very likely there will be no more world wide conflicts, only invasions and intrusions into nations for the purpose of meeting humanitarian needs and/or stopping violence of one ethnic or religious group against another.

Personally, I believe we have seen this white horse brought out of the stall during President Bush's administration, and now it is time for Clinton to straddle the saddle and continue the conquest. How long can it be before the Church becomes conspicuous by its absence? By the way, the number of true believers I believe to be relatively small. Whether they will be missed at all is the question.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir:

Please continue to send me The PROJECTOR - it is a real blessing and an encouragement to me in this ministry.

Pastor M.F.  
Benson, IL.

"God bless you and your ministry."

A.H.  
Goldsboro, NC

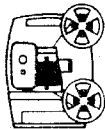
you to give money, and they are reproving because you have not given it, but they are not preaching against sin. People will not listen to a TV preacher preach against sin. If a TV preacher were to do so, he could not get enough money to pay his TV bill! So this apostasy is hidden. It is secret. The word *mystery* means secret; the word *iniquity* means lawless, and so it is a secret of lawlessness. What kind of lawlessness? It is the complete and total disregard for the divine law, for the Word of God, and what the Word of God teaches. If you tell a parent today what the Bible says about the discipline of children, they say, "I'm not interested in what the Bible tells me about the discipline of children. I'll do it my own way." If you don't believe it, go into the homes of people and say, "I have a Bible here. It tells you how to discipline your children. Would you like to know how to rear joyful, wonderful children that will be a blessing and joy to you; that you'll enjoy around the table? They will never give you problems; they'll never give you trouble; they'll always be a blessing. Would you like to know how to rear such children?" They say, "Well, I have a Bible here. No! I'm not interested! I have my own ideas about child rearing."

Well, you go ahead with your ideas and rear your children the way you want, but the Bible tells us how to do it. You can do it God's way, or you can just let the children go to Hell. That is the choice. The same is true in other areas. You can say to people who are having marital problems, "Let me tell you what the Bible teaches." They really are not interested. They would rather go to a psychologist and let him tell them how to have things the way they would like them and still solve their problems for them. The only problem is, that it just doesn't work - not for the long haul.

The Bible's answers are not accepted today. They are not accepted today by the people in the pew or by the man on the street. A lot of men on the street have more respect for the Word of God than professing Christians in the churches. Well, you go ahead with your own ideas and you will reap the fruit of your own ideas. The Word of God is settled in Heaven. It will stand the test of time. If

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## The PROJECTOR



EDITOR  
Dr. Dayton Hobbs

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*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, (that is mature, complete), thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (II Tim. 3:16,17). Then he goes on in Chapter 4, I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom; Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. (II Tim. 4:1,2). That is what is lacking today. You do not hear reproving, rebuking, and exhorting. You hear very few preachers on the radio or TV reprove, rebuke, and exhort. They are exhorting*

# Stars of the Morning

By: "Aunt Carolyn"



## Joey and the "Side-Show"

Perhaps you could say that Joey was a studious boy--but not a very diligent one. He completed the assignment just as the teacher gave it -- no less, but also never any more. He did the minimum of what the teacher assigned but never gave one extra effort to make his papers excellent. He never gave the extra fifteen minutes to prepare the best lesson or the extra time and diligence to have the best paper in the class. He was not willing to give the attention to detail or the margin of effort that made the difference between good and best.

Perhaps you could say that Joey was a worker--but not a very intent or energetic one. He fulfilled the minimum directions of any task given him and was satisfied with that. The inner drive to move quickly took flight and left him when he began, and he only trudged his way through the task. The drive and energy to do a first quality job, to put on the finishing touch, to make his work a show piece was somehow lacking. He seemed satisfied to just "get by".

He did not like to be tied to responsibility. Work seemed only a necessity, a duty, a drudgery to be endured. Joey liked action! Joey liked excitement! Joey liked ease, fun, entertainment, and self-satisfaction. That is why this day was such a delight. He had waited for it for weeks, ever since he saw the first big billboard announcing: "Cantrell and Bynum Family Circus. New Fantastic Show Under the Big Top! Fun For All Ages!" Oh, that was for Joey! He worked and saved up enough money and at last had enough to purchase that special ticket to the afternoon performance. Mother even gave him an extra dollar to spend. It

would be wonderful and exciting to see the trained animals, the clowns, the trapeze artists, the band, and have popcorn and cotton candy! He hardly slept the night before for being so excited.

The day was hot and the circus grounds were dusty from all the commotion of setting up the big tent and bringing in the animals, and now from the throng of people crowding, pushing, and shoving to get in the ticket line. With such a long line Joey might have quite a wait, but then, it would be worth it.

As he stood in the long line before the entrance, Joey took in the surrounding sights. Above the noise of the crowd he heard a loud voice over a speaker, "Come, see the Dragon Lady. She crawls on her belly like a reptile." Joey turned to see a small tent all painted with pictures of a weird woman with alligator skin -- half woman, half beast. Joey's eyes nearly bugged out of his head.

Then another picture caught his attention just as the man barked, "You ain't seen nothin' 'til you've seen the 'Fat Lady!'" Joey thought her picture painted on the outside of the tent was sight enough. That "Fat Lady" surely would be something to see! Seventy five cents, a dollar, one dollar and fifty cents. Oh, yes, he had the money. He would have to see the show!

And there was another small tent with loud music and a loud speaker: "See the Living Skeleton!" cried the barker. "The only walking, talking, living skeleton in the world! Don't miss it! And say, kids, while you are in here, see the man-swallowing snake (What a monster), and the Two-Headed, Three-Legged Calf! You can't believe it unless you see it. Don't miss this show!" The music and the caller got Joey so excited he could hardly contain himself: The circus ticket line was still long. He could be having some fun and seeing the sights while he waited!

Soon he handed the man one dollar and fifty cents and went inside the tent. Something about the Dragon Lady did not look real. For all the barker's description and hype, she surely looked fake to Joey. And the "Fat Lady" was not nearly as fat as the picture painted outside the tent. Well, he could say he

had seen them anyway. What was next?

Oh, if he wanted to see the walking, talking, living skeleton, it would be another dollar-and-a-half. But Joey had to see it! And then the giant man-swallowing snake monster! And the two-headed, three-legged calf! And the other freakish creatures! They were all exciting to Joey. He had never seen such sights in all his life, so see them he must!

And see them he did! Yet something seemed to lack. Somehow when he saw them, they were not as exciting as he had expected. The living skeleton was just a skinny man. Joey did not think he looked any skinnier than old man Crosley. He bet old Mr. Crosley's ribs would stick out just as far as the skeleton man's if he took off his old tattered shirt. And the man-swallowing snake turned out to be only a stuffed snake hide. Dead! It could not have swallowed a dead mouse, let alone a living man! The whole thing was a fake and fraud. Joey felt hollow inside. But he had seen them. He had seen them until almost all his money was spent. Joey could not believe it. He counted again and again, but his money was nearly gone. There was not even enough left to buy his circus ticket now. He had used it all up on the "side-shows". Now he would miss out on the main performance, the special events he had come to see.

(To Be Continued)

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Invitation, from Page 1

2. A slick and flashy evangelism centered around a flamboyant, pseudo-celebrity type evangelist does not adorn the Gospel of Christ. Paul's words to Timothy are appropriate, *The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves...* (II Timothy 2:24,25).

3. A machine gun, pulpit pounding style that tends to rev up the emotions but bypasses the rational facilities is an imbalance that may produce unwanted results. In Romans 6:17 Paul rejoices that the Romans *obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine* that was preached to them. The doctrine made an impression on their minds, moved their emotions and stimulated their will to obey. Any preaching which bypasses the mind and goes straight to the emotions lacks balance.

4. Sad, story laden messages that lack Biblical substance tend to produce emotional decisions. Illustrations are designed to shed light on the truth being proclaimed; they should not be employed just to tug on listener's heart-strings so that they will respond to the invitation.

5. Interminable invitations designed to wear down resistance until someone, anyone, responds convey the message that people must be walking the aisle to demonstrate the presence of the Holy Spirit.

6. The use of crowd pressures, such as: decoys, singling people out, asking them to raise their hands and then once they have committed asking them to come forward, and calling names etc., are psychological, not spiritual tools of conversion.

7. The purpose of the invitation may not be in harmony with the message being preached. Invitations are confusing if a sermon is oriented around the gospel, but the invitation is for salvation, and dedication, baptism, or church membership. The invitation should not be broadened just to get some type of response.

8. People should not be led to believe that responding to an invitation will provide a simplified solution to a more complex problem. The pastor may produce "aisle athletes" that are struggling with the same sin week after

week if this is the case. Counseling and accountability may be necessary after the public response.

9. The pastor must be careful not to confuse the act of coming forward with the response of a heart of faith. Walking an aisle is no substitute for faith and repentance. It may be easier to walk an aisle and suffer momentary embarrassment than truly repent from sin.

10. There may be a need to re-evaluate the presentation of the gospel in child evangelism. Young people are being encouraged to base their assurance of salvation on a decision they wrote down in the flyleaf of their Bibles instead of on the fruit they display in their lives (I John).

11. Personal workers need to be carefully trained, not chosen haphazardly from the congregation.

12. The congregation may become callous toward an invitation if it is repeated every service. Instead of a time of great personal self-evaluation, it can become like the announcements-something they sit through mindlessly.

13. A pastor may feel a great sense of personal power during the invitation. He may feel that it is due to his persuasive ability that "dead" men are made to live.

### THE USE OF THE PUBLIC INVITATION

There is no clear mandate in Scripture to call for immediate decision and to ask people to come forward and confess Christ publicly. If we did not give a public invitation for the next six months, and we were truly preaching the gospel, would people still be saved? The actual preaching of the gospel is the instrument which the Father uses to regenerate a soul. There are several verses which emphasize this priority in conversion: 1) Lydia's heart is opened by the Lord so that she responds to the words spoken by Paul (Acts 16:14). 2) Paul acknowledges that it is the power of the Gospel that brings salvation to all that will believe (Romans 1:16; I Corinthians 1:17), 3) conversion is a supernatural experience; faith and repentance are the gifts of God (Romans 10:17; Ephesians 2:8,9), and 4) Paul rejoices that the Word of God is working

effectually in those who believe, not the word of man (I Ths. 2:13). This produces great liberty! The preacher is not responsible for producing fruit when he preaches. Success does not depend upon results, but upon faithfulness to the truth.

The pastor is responsible for a clear presentation of the Word of God. The main purpose of preaching is not to save souls, but to exalt and glorify the Lord Jesus Christ (I Cor. 2:1-5; 12-14; 3:5-7). Listen to these prophetic words of C.H. Spurgeon:

We know His will only by His Word and unless truth comes before results, conversions will soon be regarded as more important than the divine glory.

(The entire article may be ordered from *Ohio Bible Fellowship Visitor*, 3865 North High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43214)

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you bow before it, it will bless your family, your home, your business, and everything you have. But if you reject it, it will curse you, damn your children, and ruin your home. The rejecting of the Word of God allows in all the other forces that will ruin your life.

So it is my opinion that we're in the midst of the apostasy. The rapture is at hand. The Lord is coming soon to take out true believers, but when that takes place the visible church on earth won't miss a beat. The Southern Baptist Convention will be meeting next week, and if the Lord should come tonight it would not stop the Southern Baptist Convention. Perhaps a few members would be missing, but the convention will go on, it won't stop. Most Independent Baptist meetings would not be affected. Most of them would go right on. Independent Baptist churches would be operating Sunday morning continuing in their form of godliness. That's what the Word of God says concerning the apostasy. The apostasy does not mean that they leave their profession. They still claim salvation; they just don't possess it. It doesn't mean that they leave their church, they still go to their church. It doesn't mean that they leave their

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# FENCE STRADDLING FUNDAMENTALISTS

By: Tod Brainard

Concession is a word that in our day is being bandied about in the news media which represents the attitude necessary for peace, prosperity, and defeat of poverty in a new world order. *New Webster's Dictionary* defines concession as nothing more than the act of yielding or conceding a given point or privilege in order to gain some greater point or privilege. It is plain to see that in a new world economy nations are willing to give up economic sovereignty in order to get a bigger piece of the financial pie. Concession is the siren call of Antichrist. What does this have to do with Fundamentalism? As a young fundamentalist, I personally feel that many leading "campers" within fundamentalism are moving their tents ever so quietly and placing them precariously on the fence of concession in order to gain something in return. We should not be fooled by men who proclaim their obedience to the Word of God and yet yield in areas of Biblical Separation. They are seeking something in return in this life. This return they hope to gain by their concession is perceived as greater than future rewards that scriptural obedience will bring.

### SAD NEWS

In the most recent issue of the Fundamentalist Digest there was an excellent article entitled, "Gothard Institute Features Leading New-Evangelical". As stated in the article Bill Gothard featured in his "International Advanced Institute" Dr. Stephen Olford, well known for his new-evangelical associations and ecumenical meetings. This is not surprising. Bill Gothard has lived and is at home in the New-Evangelical camp. What is surprising was the mention of a prominent fundamentalist church in Greenville, South Carolina that still organizes and sponsors Gothard Seminars. Not only has this church sponsored Gothard Seminars in the past

but has slated another 33 hour Gothard Basic seminar for November 8-13 of 1993. Bill Gothard's ties to New-Evangelicalism run deep. Can this support of a blatant New-Evangelical compromiser be explained?

### CONTROVERSY OR CONCESSION?

No one desires controversy. Controversy is a bitter word to most present day fundamentalists, for it entails negativism and confrontation with other "brethren" within and without the camp concerning purity and error. Controversy in their estimation reflects a shoot-from-the-hip mentality, and that is taboo in the average local church of today. In this day of psychological awareness no one wants to be found guilty of harming another believer's self-esteem or creating an environment of hostility with another brother or sister in Christ. Therefore, concession with its non-confrontational, positive view of the "brethren" is very appealing. Concession brings benefits that are visible and tangible, too. Greater numbers in the pews, larger offerings in the plates, more opportunities for preaching engagements, and greater recognition are but a few of the rewards of concession.

### IS GOD'S WORD THE FINAL AUTHORITY?

*Now we command you, Brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.*

*And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.* II Thess. 3:6,14-15.

Bishop J.C. Ryle once wrote, "Controversy in religion is a hateful thing. It is hard enough to fight the Devil, the world, and the flesh, without private differences in our own camp. But there is one thing which is even worse than controversy, and that is false

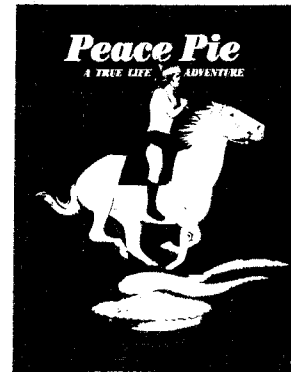
doctrine tolerated, allowed, and permitted without protest or molestation."

Dr. James M. Gray, author of the *Home Bible Study Commentary*, had this to say about controversy, "Controversy? It is either controversy with the powers of darkness, or compromise with them, or silence which gives consent that they may have their way."

The command has been given, the Word of God has spoken. There is no room for concession. Fence straddlers beware! Obedience to the Word of God will not always bring the applause of other believers. It will never be popular to expose dangerous trends and error in ministries and personalities. But faithful obedience to the Word will bring glory to God and a "well done thou good and faithful servant" from the Bema of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

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**Teaching  
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**NEWS -  
EXTRA**

Young people today have been exposed to many humanistic ideas and thoughts. As a Christian teacher it is very important to prepare students to recognize worldly techniques designed to lure their minds away from truth.

Let's be aggressive in teaching our students to think and evaluate by doing so ourselves. My fifth and sixth grade students are studying about newspapers. They examined several different papers and were quite amazed at the variety of news articles, editorials, features, etc. that were available.

Students learn that every author's philosophy comes through in his/her article. We must teach our young people to look for bias and recognize it rather than accept everything they read. Given a news article on the same subject from different newspapers, the bias is easily recognized. Then, a close look at God's Word to find out truth on the given subject will further enlighten the class. The third step is to judge and make decisions concerning the article's value.

Students can also learn comparison/contrast through a study of newspapers. Often students do not really understand the difference between these two terms. This exercise requires thinking skills to note similarities and differences in style, form, and substance.

The editorial section is ripe with teaching opportunities. Students must be taught the difference between fact and opinion, how opinions are formed, and also how to make sure our opinions are well thought out, having a basis in facts. Editorial cartoons have been interesting during the recent election season, and the students in my class have learned to "read" them as well.

Most of our students receive newspapers in their homes on a regular

basis. They need to learn to *use* this tool but not be misled by false ideas just because they appear in print in the newspaper.

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personal testimony that they are saved, they go on with that. But it does mean that they leave the authority of the Scripture as we pointed out. The Scripture restricts the flesh. It restricts our actions; what we can do; what we can say; what we can think. You see, I am bound by the Bible. I can't tell you what I think; I have to tell you what the Bible says. Now if the Bible doesn't say or I don't understand what the Bible says I may tell you what I think. But if the Bible speaks I don't have anything to say. I have to tell you what the Bible says. I just don't have liberty outside the Word of God. I'm a Book-bound preacher. I'm bound to the Word of God, and I have no liberty to say what I think. I'm at liberty to tell you only what the Bible says.

#### EXALTING MAN

They have left the truth as we read in II Thess., and this is the thing that they leave first - the exaltation of Jesus Christ. Generally speaking, what is missing today in the church? Well, most of the songs are about *my experiences*, what I did or what I did not do, or what I'm going to do, or what I wish I had done, etc. They have something to do with me or man. Music is one of the first ways that you can recognize apostasy. Music is one of the first areas the apostasy reveals itself. When people quit singing the glory of God; when people quit singing to the praise and honor of Jesus Christ; when people start singing about their own experiences; when people start singing songs other than those that magnify, glorify, and exalt the Lord, that is a sure evidence of apostasy. II Thess. 2:3, talks about how the Antichrist will deceive. God said, *Let no*

*man deceive you by any means. This "man of sin (will) be revealed, the son of perdition, but notice verse four, Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped. Now here is the heart of apostasy. It exalts man instead of God. When Antichrist says that he is God, he is saying, "I am God, but you are also gods. We are all gods." Antichrist is really saying, "We've arrived, we can rule ourselves, we now have a perfect democracy." He doesn't say that he has learned something superior so that he can rule over us. He says that man has now made it on his own. Man is God. Man does not need another God. He can operate without the God of the Scriptures. Notice what it says he does. He opposeth. He opposes the exaltation of Christ, and he exalts himself. This is the heart of apostasy, playing down the glory of God, taking the glory away from Jesus Christ, not singing the great old songs that glorify, magnify, and exalt the Lord Jesus Christ.*

#### OPPOSING THE APOSTASY MAGNIFY JESUS CHRIST

*Arise my soul, arise, cast off thy guilty fears; The bleeding sacrifice, in thy behalf appears. Before the throne my surety stands; Before the throne my surety stands; My name is written in His hands. There's a song! That's a message! That magnifies Christ! I am nothing; Christ is everything! Not only in music is this true but also in preaching. What kind of preaching do most churches get? I have to tell you - soulwinning. Soulwinning Sunday morning, soulwinning Sunday night, soulwinning Wednesday night, soulwinning any other night they have a meeting. It's soulwinning. You say, are you opposed to soulwinning? No, I'm not opposed to soulwinning. I'm opposed to that kind of so-called soulwinning, because it is not soulwinning. It pushes man, man's efforts, and man's ability. It puts the pressure on man. It makes a preacher live in dread and fear of meeting the next preacher, because he might ask him how many he won that week causing fear that he didn't win as many as the other preacher.*

(To Be Continued)

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# DIVINE EFFICACY OF PRAYER

By: Arthur Pierson

(Written approximately 100 years ago)  
(Conclusion)

## TRUE PRAYER

Our Lord taught a great lesson in Matthew 18:19. He said: *If two of you shall agree (symphonize) on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven.* The agreement referred to is not that of a mere human covenant, nor even sympathy; it is *symphony*. Symphony is agreement of sounds in a musical chord, and depends upon fixed laws of harmony. It can not be secured by any arbitrary arrangement. One cannot lay his fingers accidentally or carelessly upon the keys of a musical instrument and produce symphony of sounds. Such touch may evoke only intolerable discord, unless regulated by a knowledge of the principles of harmony. Nay, there is even a deeper necessity, namely, that the keys touched shall themselves be *in tune with the whole instrument*. Two conditions, then, are needful; first, that a skilful hand shall put the whole instrument in tune; and then that an equally skilful hand shall touch keys which are capable of producing together what is called "a true chord."

This language evinces Divine design. He is teaching a great lesson on the mystery of prayer, which likewise demands two great conditions; first, that the praying soul shall be in harmony with God Himself; and then that those who unite in prayer shall, because of such unity with Him, be in harmony with each other. There must be, therefore, back of all prevailing supplication and intercession One who, with infinite skill, tunes the keys into accord with His own ear, and then touches them, like a master musician, so that they respond together to His will and give forth the chord which is in His mind.

No true philosophy of prayer can ever be framed which does not include these conditions. Many have false conception of what prayer is. To them

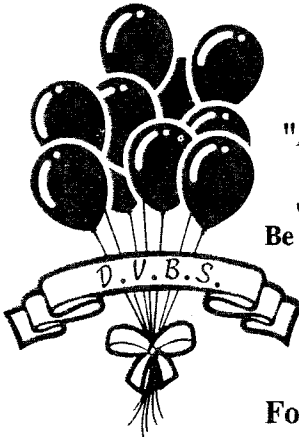
it is merely asking for what one wants. But this may be so far from God's standard as to lack the first essentials of prayer. It may be asking something to consume it upon our own lusts. We are to ask "in the name" of Christ. But that is not simply using His name in prayer. The name is the nature; it expresses the character, and is equivalent to the person. To ask in Christ's name is to come to God, *as identified with the very person of Christ*. A wife makes a purchase in her husband's name. Literally, she uses his name, not her own. She says, "I am Mrs. A \_\_\_\_\_," which means, "I am his wife, identified with his personality, character, wealth, commercial credit, and business standing." To go to God in Christ's name is to claim identity with Christ as a member of His body, one with Him before the Father, and having in Him a right to the Father's gifts, a right to draw on the Father's infinite resources.

Again, we are told that, if we ask anything "according to His will," He heareth us. But what is asking according to His will but ceasing to ask according

to our own self-will? Here the impulse is not human, but essentially Divine. It implies a knowledge of His will, an insight into His own mind, and a sympathy with His purpose. Now is this possible unless by the Holy Spirit we are brought into such fellowship with God as that He can guide us in judgment and yearning, and teach us His way? He is indeed *able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think*, but it is *according to His power which worketh in us*. If that power work not in us first, how can it work for us, in answered prayer?

In order to gain higher results, wrought for the Church or the world, in answer to supplication, there must first be deeper results wrought in the believer by the Holy Spirit. In other words, *there must be a higher type of personal holiness if there is to be a higher measure of power in prayer*. The carnal mind does not fall into harmony with God, does not even see and perceive His mind, and hence the carnally-minded disciple can not discern the will of God in prayer, but is continually hindered and hampered by mistaking self-impelled petitions for divinely inspired prayers, confounding what self-will craves with what is spiritually needful and Scripturally warranted.

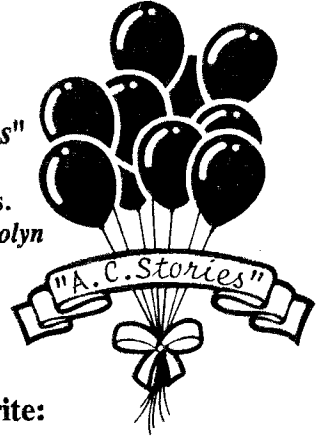
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God is calling His people to a revival of *faith in the Divine efficacy of prayer*.

Our Lord teaches us that the prayer of faith has the power of a *fiat* or a Divine decree. God said sublimely, *Let light be!* and light was. The Lord Jesus Christ says: *If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed - in which, however small, is the possibility and potency of life - ye shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed; or to this sycamore tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and it shall obey you.* This is the language not of petition, but of decree. It is, in some sort, a laying hold on Omnipotence, so that nothing is impossible to the praying soul.

When we reach such heights of teaching and compare them with the low level of our life we are struck dumb with amazement, first at the astounding possibilities of faith, as put before us, and then at the equally astounding impossibilities which unbelief substitutes for the offered omnipotence of supplication. When we think of the possible heights of intercession we seem again to hear the saintly McCheyne crying out. "Do everything in earnest! If it is worth doing, then do it with all your might. Above all, keep much in the presence of God; never see the face of man till you have seen His face." That is the preparation of prayer, prevailing first with God to enable us to prevail with man. Jacobi must have been thinking along these lines when he said: "My watchword, and that of my reason, is not I, but One who is more and better than I; One who is entirely different from what I am--I mean God. I neither am, nor care to be, if He is not!" It is prayer that makes God real--the highest reality and verity; and that sends us back into the world with the conviction and consciousness that He is, and is in us, mighty to work in us, and through us, as instruments, so that nothing shall be impossible to the instrument, because of the Workman, back of it, who holds and wields the weapon.

The power of such prayer defies all competition or imitation by the most perfect forms of liturgy. Who can copy or canvass the imprisoned flame of a priceless gem with mere brush and pigments! Or counterfeit the

photosphere of the sun with yellow chalk! There is a flame of God which prayer lights within; there is a glow and light and heat in the life which can be kindled only by a coal from the golden altar which is before the throne. It is only the few who find their way thither and know the enkindling power; but to those few the Church and the world owe mighty upheavals and outpourings. (Rev. 8.)

Chemical galvanism possesses this peculiarity, that an increase of its powers cannot be gained by increasing the dimensions of the cells of the battery, but can be by increasing their number. We need *more* intercessors if we are to have greatly increased power. The number of cells must be increased. More of God's people must learn to pray. The foes are too many for a few to cope with them, however empowered of God. The variety of human want and woe, the scattered millions of the unsaved, the wide territory to be covered with intercession--all these and other like considerations demand multiplied forces. Each human being has only a very limited knowledge of human need. Our individual circle of acquaintance is so comparatively narrow that even the most prayerful spirit cannot survey the whole field. But when in all parts of the destitute territory supplicators multiply, even these narrow circles, placed side by side and largely overlapping, cover the whole broad field of need. Our own personal and limited knowledge and range of intelligent sympathy meet and touch similar and sympathetic souls, so that what we do not see or feel or pray for, appeals to others of our fellow disciples; and so, in proportion as the intercessors multiply, every interest of mankind finds its representatives in the secret place and at the throne.

*We cannot make up for lack of praying by excess of working.* In fact working without praying is a sort of practical atheism, for it leaves out God. It is the prayer that prepares for work, that arms us for the warfare, that furnishes us for the activity. It behooves us, studying intently the promises to prayer, to say unto the Lord: "This being Thy word, I will henceforth live as a man of prayer and claim my privilege and use my power as an intercessor. "

Here is the highest identification with the Son of God. It is almost being admitted to a sort of fellowship in His mediatorial work! During this dispensation His work is mainly intercession. He calls us to take a subordinate part in the holy office, standing, like Phinehas, between the living and the dead to stay the plague; like Elijah, between heaven and earth to unlock heaven's flood-gates of blessing and command the fire and flood of God! Is this true? Then what can be more awful and august than such dignity and majesty of privilege! Ignatius welcomes the Numidian lion in the arena, saying: "I am grain of God; I must be ground between the teeth of lions to make bread for God's people." He felt in the hour of martyrdom the privilege of joining his dying Lord in a sacrifice that Bushnell would call "vicarious."

Who will join the risen Lord in a service of intercession? The greatest difficulty in the way of practical conversion of men may not be in God's eyes so much a barrier of ungodliness among the heathen as a barrier of unbelief among His own disciples!

The sixteenth century was great in painters, the seventeenth in philosophers, the eighteenth in writers, the nineteenth in preachers and inventors; God grant that the twentieth may be forever historically memorable as the century of intercessors.

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