

Oct 14, 93

## Pastor's Pen

There is no way to keep up with some of our folks. A batch of them went up to Baltimore last week to watch New York and the Birds play. While sleeping in their hotel, so their story goes, a man with a small light entered the room and made off with an assorted amount of clothing, plus a pocket book! One of the dreamers opened his eye but without his contacts, everything was like fog. The thief just migrated on down the hall to another room.

I would say that what took place was an outright steal. There was a minister who announced the hymn "I Love To Steal Awhile Away", and the chorister took over. He began hopefully, "I love to steal" — but found that he had pitched the note too high. Again he began, "I love to steal" — but this time it was too low. He was just about to make a third try when the minister broke in with, "My brethren, in view of our brother's weakness let us pray."

These grown-up boys may one day tell us how effective they were in hitch-hiking home! Money does talk and most of the time it says goodbye. Remember, George Washington once told the truth even though he thought it might get him into trouble. Even though we live under Social Security, I suggest you use the locks on the door. Speaking of the end — Jesus said, "They all slumbered and slept. At midnight there was a cry made." Matt. 25:5.

Sept 23, 83

## Pastor's Pen

"Everything turned around", this is something all of us would like to do now and then. Times are bad and with the physical eye daylight is not in view. Health is failing, bills are large, the family is falling apart, or some evil habit has just destroyed all the pleasure of living.

The description above is that of Dodie Haas, a native of Wilkes-Barre, Pa. He was sixty-one, a drunken derelict and a drug addict. His habit required 50 cc's (almost two ounces) of drugs and a pint of whiskey everyday. From that point in his history he lost his family, his job, integrity, and hope. Jean Tarkelson, a staff writer for The Times Leader, Wilkes-Barre, described Haas as a first-class prodigal.

In 1940 Haas was at the top of success. He was a nationally recognized insurance salesman and vice-president of the Junior Chamber of Commerce. He had an award-winning local radio show, What's Good In The News With Dodie Haas, Uncle Dodie's Talent Search — made him a household name and provided a salary of \$200 an hour. In the late 1940's following a heart attack he was given injections of Demerol. He thought he was receiving vitamins. His wife told him he was on dope. He tried detoxification centers. The sky was dark and he was without family or job.

His night was turned to day on May 8, 1962, Haas was introduced to the local Salvation Army, who sheltered and helped him stop using drugs. This former local radio personality and community leader gave a luncheon speech in 1983 and said, "It was something that happened in my heart, it is believing in the Word of God — that in Christ we are all new creatures."

The Gospel turned everything around. The Salvation Army has helped

thousands of "down and outers". The message preached by these servants of the Lord can bring integrity and hope to you.

Oct 7, 83

## Pastor's Pen

I saw the X-Ray in The Virginian-Pilot showing Pamela Jane Perkins digestive system. Why didn't she say the blessing before swallowing that onion ring (diamond-studded band worth \$8,000)? What a strange jewelry box, to await further use. In her haste to get rich quick, she should have looked at all ends. For sure, it was good that the tax man had not heard of this good maid who worked cheap. However, by saving, scraping, and extravagances at the table her monstrous appetite brought sudden riches. As the Proverb says, "He who fixeth his soul on show, loseth reality."

Pamela must have had a ferocious hunger for rich sauce, she had also by knife and fork placed an emerald with four diamond chips, valued at \$400 in her mouth. I judge this tasteless morsel was not suited for the palate.

Why didn't she say grace before eating? If she had, it would have saved the day for her. The income received would have been accepted, preventing the disagreeable snapshots. On the matter of giving thanks, I read about an old man and his food. The wife had been at her club all afternoon and served her husband a dinner of left-overs. He started to eat without the customary asking of the blessing. "Why don't you ask the blessing dear?" asked the wife. "I believe everything on the table has been blessed before", he replied.

The lesson is that none of us should play with sin, it is the Devil's live wire. "Be sure your sins will find you out" - "Whatsoever you sow that shall ye also reap." The Commandment is still in force "Thou shalt not steal."

It is one thing to be X-Rayed and found out with a composite photograph at the hospital - but consider the day of Judgment when your entire life will

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appear without any shadowy outlines!

Sept 30, 83.

## Pastor's Pen

A pointed question: "Can two walk together except they be agreed?"

The prophet Amos put this startling question to Israel. I think he is putting that question to his people today.

Can the church and the world walk together - the one in fellowship with the other? Can we yoke vice and virtue, truth and error, light and darkness - these are forever the opposites. There is no way, the two will not mix. A hog loves and delights to plunge into mud - a sheep loves and seeks green pastures. It would be unnatural that a sheep and a hog should be yoked together. The same holds true of Christians going around yoked with the world.

In making reference to a certain man's walking, George Ade said: "He walks like he had gravel in his shoes." What a different story Psalm 26 gives, "I have walked in integrity". This is an old spiritual conflict. Dr. Roy Angell tells of the occasion when a cowboy whose horse had broken loose and gone back into a canyon area to be with wild horses. He set out to search and finally came upon the herd of wild horses, approaching them very carefully so that he might stalk out his own horse. When he was near enough to begin talking to the horse, he spoke up and called him. His voice shocked the herd and almost immediately they ran off in the opposite direction. His own horse stopped for a while and turned his head back toward his master who was calling. Then he looked to the wild herd of which he had once been a part as they ran to another pasture. Torn between the desire to go with the wild herd and the pull to go back to his master. Step by step the cowboy approached his horse, threw a rope around his neck, patted

him, and led him back to his place of service. There had to be a break with the wild herd. I hope we get the picture "Be ye not unequally yoked together."

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Aug 19, 83

## Pastor's Pen

Have you ever thought about a good motto for your life? Did you ever make a choice about spiritual things and make it stick? Are you just drifting along with the tide and floating around bumping into other drifting objects.

The Duke of Wellington once attended a lecture where an articulate Theologian was denouncing missions. He contended that missions was a drain on the churches. Missionaries often caused chaos and strife as primitive native cultures submitted to the change brought by the Gospel. He concluded that it would be better to allow them to continue in their unconverted ways.

After a few moments the Duke asked, "What were the final orders our Master left?"

"Well," stammered the speaker, "He said to go into all the world and make Disciples."

"That is the way I've always understood it," came the Duke's reply. "I'm no Theologian. I'm a soldier, and as a soldier I know that my first duty is to carry out my commander's orders. When my commander gives me marching orders, I march. All I can say to you, Sir, is look to your marching orders!"

In connection with God's plan for every life I read a letter by Henry Wright of Yale. The message was addressed to his mother in 1907. Speaking of a desire for larger usefulness, he said, "I have taken as my motto Christ's Words, 'For their sakes I sanctify myself.' 'Their sakes' - that is, the men of Yale - 'I sanctify myself' - in this case more mental discipline, to be able to help them, when I return."

What about your motto in life, do you know what marching orders the Master left? Have you ever said for "His sake" I sanctify myself? Don't

you think it's about time for you to find out God's plan for the present and the future.

Annie Mae Tayloe was a woman with a motto - "Doing the best I can for Jesus every day." This little woman, weighing less than a hundred pounds was heavy on God's scales. Always in Sunday School and Worship Services. Did you know faithfulness to the church does not happen without a choice. Tie your life to a worthwhile motto.

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Sept 16, 83

## Pastor's Pen

Have you ever thought about creation? It is a subject you cannot trust to science. The Biblical approach to creation is different from the secular scientific view point.

Perhaps you have creative talent. A woman makes a dress, the dress tells us something about the seamstress, style, usefulness, plain, or fancy. One thing for sure the dress did not just happen. When you see a huge chocolate cake, did it just happen by chance? No, there was a creative hand.

In modern days much has been said about the "mistakes of Genesis". They say the earth could not have taken place in six days - instead, they assert it took from fifty to one hundred million years in the process before it was suitable for the habitation of Adam and his wife.

Perhaps you have some ideas of your own. But I like the theory of W. W. Staley. He put his view thus: "The concept I have of creation is that God made all departments of the material universe complete. That is, the earth was created with all interior formations as if it had passed through many geological changes. My basis is in my thought of Adam. I do not think Adam was created a baby and then passed through stages of development, but I think he contained all the interior organs, functions, and conditions of a normally developed man by the processes of growth from babyhood. All growth since original creation develops things and beings like those first creations. I do not think that coal beds grew; I think God created them; and yet I am not ignorant of the teachings of geology.

The process of development from liquid mass leaves me no ground for the creation of Adam but the development of a man from a baby, which seems to

me unreasonable. My mind can believe in a whole creation in six solar days easier than eons and gradual processes. If a man does not know where he's going on this subject, there is no telling where he'll be when he gets there!

Sept. 2 - 83

## Pastor's Pen

Did you ever hear of a man with a plan to make a fortune and then — after I make fifty-thousand dollars, then — C. T. Gordon, a fine business man, a model man, his habits were good, he was not a speculator, but a hard working man in a legitimate field of business. So far as making money was concerned, he was very successful. He lived in Norfolk.

His one special short coming was in the fact that he gave little attention to religion, not that he was against it, or opposed to it, but to give you the plain fact, he neglected it. He made the mistake that thousands are making every day.

His wife died and he was left with the care of seven lovely children. How could he face this situation without faith? It was at this point in his life he had a heart to heart with a preacher and began to seek salvation as God's gift and only hope. He frankly said: "My wife and I have worked hard and lived economically. I had planned to lay up fifty-thousand dollars, and then retire from business and spend the remainder of our days in ease and pleasure. At length I have laid up the money, but I had not more than accomplished my purpose when my dear wife was taken away in death, and now with my aim attained so far as money is concerned, I see that I, too, must soon follow her into the spirit world. It is true my children are left with some money, but I myself am not ready for judgment."

He soon accepted Jesus Christ and made rapid progress in the Christian life. He gained the money he sought but did not find the happiness he thought it would give him.

Jesus put this lesson for all of us in a few words: Matt. 6:33 — "But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his

righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Do you see the point of emphasis — it is not seek God second, or third, or in the last emergency, but first — let it be the first concern of your life to be "right with God."

You need to learn this lesson — not tomorrow, not next week, or next month . . . but now!

aug 12, 83

## Pastor's Pen

Forty years on the firing line! Some forty years ago it is reported that a military funeral was in progress. At the close a volley was shot. In the excitement a woman fainted. A little boy (looked first at his Grandma and then at the firing squad) shouted — "My land, they've shot Grandma."

It was my privilege on August 7th, 1983, to preach at the fortieth Anniversary of Virginia Heights Baptist Church on Kempsville Road. The original name of the church was Broad Creek Village. I searched the Bible for the word "Forty years". The first one discovered was Moses spending forty years in the wilderness. Not feeling that would be suitable, I found the place where God fed Israel manna forty years until they reached the land of Canaan. That had a better application of the care received. The church has been blessed with a great fellowship.

The special day was filled with "old timers" greeting each other from far and near. The enthusiasm reminded me of a story that happened down in the mountains of East Tennessee. In a revival old Brother Estep in his enthusiasm sometimes "stretch his blanket" — he loved to get up a sensation among the brethren. He arose and said — "Brethren, while I was a walking in my garden late yestiddiy afternoon ameditatin' on the final end of the world — I looked up and I seed Gabriel rise his silver trumpet, which was about fifty feet long, to his blazin lips, and I hearn him give it a toot that knocked me into the fence corner an' shuck the very taters out'n the ground."

"Tut, tut," said the Preacher, "don't talk that way in this meeting, we all know you didn't hear Gabriel blow his trumpet. The old man's wife jumped to her feet to help her husband out and said — "Now Parson, you sit down.

Don't you dispute John's word that a way. He mount have heard a toot or two!"

Another thing, I forgot to mention about the celebration — there was plenty of food! The history in pictures of Pastors along the main hall told a grand story.

"To the front, away in the Gospel war.

With the cross of Christ going on before;

Mid the fire and smoke and the cannon's roar,

We'll shoulder to shoulder stand."

Thank God for forty years on the firing line in His service and may His grace multiply the ministry of Virginia Heights during the next forty.

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aug 12, 80

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July 25, 83

## Pastor's Pen

I went down for the dedication of a beautiful house of worship at Knott's Island, North Carolina. The church began in 1876 and the first building was erected in 1878, one room, heated by a wood stove.

The new building of 1983 will last a long time if it is kept on the foundation. The Pastor, T. E. Thieman and congregation had embedded in the four corners new Bibles covered in plastic. As they said, literally this house is "built on the Word of God".

The Island is blessed with a new center of worship and the Lord has shown great favour. A Glasgow preacher said the Gospel suits the British Isles — The Welshman likes something to sing about — The Irishman likes something to fight about — The Englishman likes something to talk about — The Scotchman likes it because it's free! Baptists can sing, leave out the fighting, and preach the grace of God with freedom until time shall be no more.

Another beautiful thing about the new stone and brick structure is to be found in the cornerstone. When the stone was to be set, Mr. Tilford Wade presented a cut glass flower vase. It had a gift his mother received when she appeared on a church program in 1883. "I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley." Song of Solomon 2:1. Another thing to consider is that glass is one of the most stable of all materials. It keeps its shape and its surface is among the hardest in the world. Tempered glass can withstand 30,000 pounds per square inch. Glass will not rot.

Mother Wade's little flower vase in years to come will remind of the great scene in Heaven found in the Book of Revelation 21:18, 21. "And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear

July 22, 83

## Pastor's Pen

It happened in the Tucker Swamp Baptist Church in Southhampton County, Virginia. William E. Hatcher was engaged in a Revival during the burning season of August — a meeting of surpassing spiritual power. The morning sermon had been preached, the invitation to inquirers had been given, and many rich old Revival songs had been rolling through the church and the powers of the Lord was upon the people.

Dr. Hatcher strolled down the aisle on the men's side of the church and under the bend of the little gallery he saw a boy sitting on a small backless bench crying. The little fellow was possibly fourteen, his hair red almost to the flaming point.

"What is the matter my boy?" Hatcher inquired in a kindly tone. "I want to be a Christian," he said with conviction. "Did you not hear the invitation, why did you not come?" "Yes, sir, I heard the invitation, but I want my brother to go with me." "Where is your brother?" The little fellow turned to a much larger boy on his other side and said, "Here he is. This is brother Walter and I want him to go with me. Come on Walter and let's both of us go."

Hatcher said the appeal of Chris, the young brother was thrilling. Walter with full respect said, "I ought to go, you are a better boy than I am, you can go on and don't wait for me."

Chris went up the aisle and suddenly went back, put his arms around his brother's neck. Presently, Walter rose to his feet, Chris grasped his hand and they went to the altar together. As truly as Andrew brought Simon to Jesus, Chris had brought Walter to Jesus.

Walter Boykin became a wealthy, influential, and valuable Christian citi-

zen of Georgia. Chris Boykin continued busy for the Lord at Buchanan, Virginia.

Bringing some one to the Saviour will create a passion for soul-winning.

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glass . . . and the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the streets of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass."

I gladly give my testimony in defense of the building of fine church houses, because their very structure and contents indicates what we think of our God.



Oct. 26, 79

## Pastor's Pen

Mark Alexander, Sr.: Christian, Deacon, Sunday School Teacher, faithful follower of Christ, left us a rich heritage. Before his exodus he said, "I am standing on the rock of ages. My faith is on a firm foundation. Many people someday are going to be sorry they missed it!"

I had been standing by his bed and reading a passage from Hebrews eleven. I mentioned the sustaining faith of the heroes listed in that Bible passage. Brother Mark, picked up the conversation and raised his hand to Heaven saying, "Preacher, I'm standing on the rock of ages". This incident took place just a few hours before his death.

His last hours on this earth were filled with instruction concerning the Christian's death. He would pray all night quoting verses from the Bible and often teaching a passage to those around his bed. He talked about the new birth, the blood of Christ, and the mercy of Christ. In his prayers he magnified the goodness and mercy of God in his life. "I feel so unworthy" he would pray.

Here, was a man who knew the Holy Spirit blessed with leadership. He often supplied our pulpit in the absence of the pastor. As a layman, he went into the homes of lost men and witnessed for his Lord. He gladly dedicated his son to be the Lord's missionary in Argentina. The last word he sent his missionary son was "Stay on the job!" He believed the Lord's work was important and urged his son to not let anything interfere with his serving Christ.

Many other things could be written about Brother Alexander's love for family, home, and church. The message for you today is, "are you standing on the rock of ages?" Can you say with the hymn writer, "Rock of ages, cleft

for me, let me hide myself in Thee!"

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Nov. 2, 79

## Pastor's Pen

Did you ever work beside your son? The answer may be "no", but you have or do work along beside someone.

Oliver Dail loved to tell how he received some of his best training working in the field beside his father. "Papa, would take me into the corn field, and I would work with a hoe in the row beside him. As we chopped out weeds, and thinned the corn, Papa would talk about things that a young man should do and things he should not do. He told me about the facts of life and the importance of living a clean life. He told me to have respect for women and stay away from strong drink. I learned some valuable lessons as we walked along side by side in the field."

I have thought many times about what Brother Dail told me about this relationship with his Papa. It would be marvelous if every young man had a father who would walk along beside his boy and tell him how to live in this wicked world. What his Papa taught him, he put into practice. The pattern of his life was formed by lessons taught while walking a corn row. His life was as straight as an arrow. He was honest, truthful, and devoted in daily living.

Past eighty, Brother Dail continued to read his Bible. Reading it through from cover to cover, several times in the last years of his life.

He has left us a challenge, his Papa who walked beside him in the field taught him to walk with God in this world! Like Enoch of the Scriptures, "He walked with God." What a heritage to leave a son! Gen. 5:21-22. With sin all around Enoch turned his back on the world and did not comply with wicked friends, but walked the straight and narrow way that leads to life. Can you honestly say, "I walked today where Jesus walked?" The hymn says it this

way "When we walk with the Lord in the light of his word what a glory he sheds on our way!"

Oct. 12, 79

## Pastor's Pen

How do you face life? How do you react to the local happenings in your city? In the days of Jesus there were several groups of people and each group had a special way of dealing with the issues of life.

First, Zealots. They were out to fight every cause of the day. In fact, they wanted to stand up against the Roman empire. Not counting the cost or the consequences. Life was often frustrating to them because it often led to a dead end street. We meet this group today, they are out to fight the Devil and often they fight everyone not sharing their viewpoint. Many people find this attractive, they love a fight, and without considering the issues, they plunge into the strife.

Second, Essenes. This group went to the other extreme and withdrew from life into a monastic way of existence. They made an attempt to escape the responsibilities of life. People today turn to drink or drugs to escape the problems of life. Run away from life into pleasure or some other diversion, ends in turmoil.

Third, Pharisees. This group was proud and conscious of their superiority. They were what we would term separatists. Standing above the ordinary — "I thank God I am not as other men". Today we have folks who pride themselves on their clothes or even their brand of religion!

Fourth, Sadducees. Since they did not believe in the future life they became materialist. They like to handle things by force and gave money to the soldiers to say that the Disciples had stolen the body of Jesus. A large sum of money was used to stop the account of the resurrection. Some religious movements today are led by materialists.

Fifth, Herodians. This group relied on power and compromise. They were followers of the man Herod, and were ready to do anything that furthered their cause. Today we have folks who follow some policy instead of principle.

Sixth, Christians. The final group surrendered their lives to Jesus. Whatever the storm or problem they turned to Christ for the answer. The cross became a dear symbol of truth to rest their eternal destiny upon.

By the way, you still have the choice of these groups. Most of these roads are dead ends, except the way of Jesus.

Sept 28, 79

## Pastor's Pen

How would you like to have your life changed from that of a nominal Christian to one of purpose! To one that has an appetite for the things of God. Why is it that so many Christians do not have the joy they might have, or do not have overflowing praise in their hearts?

I want to tell you about Robert E. Nicholas, of Oak Park, Illinois. Born on a farm in Ontario, Canada 1882, the eldest son in a large family of boys and girls. His parents were earnest Christians and reared their family in the local Methodist Church. At age 19 Robert went to Chicago and found work in a hardware store. He received the great wages of a dollar a day -- six dollars for a week of sixty hours work. He carefully tithed his weekly wages and used the rest on room rent and daily meals. He became active in church, busy in Sunday School and witnessing for his Saviour.

Five years after coming to Chicago he established his own hardware business on largely borrowed capital. Hard work led to building one of the largest retail hardware businesses in the State of Illinois. He was instrumental in bringing branches of the large department stores into the "Chicago Loop".

This young and aggressive merchant was confronted by a preacher who inquired, "Mr. Nicholas, have you given your life completely to God?" So effective was the inquiry that he fell on his knees at once. His heart smitten with conviction that he should consecrate himself wholly to the Lord. "I yielded my life without reservation to God. I was filled with praise and re-

joicing. I became hungry for the return of the Lord Jesus.

This experience can happen in your life and you can be changed from a nominal Christian. The key to such a change is full surrender of the life to the Saviour. The Holy Spirit will grant fullness of joy. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Phil. 2:13. Helping you to want to obey him and helping you do what He wants!

Sept 14, 79

## Pastor's Pen

Back to school days are filled with enthusiasm. It means new names, new faces, new teachers, new schedules and new opportunities.

Back to school takes place every year and a multitude look forward to September. Education is a part of our lives. It was a part of our parents and for generations before.

What lies ahead for these children and young people? Will they learn to read, write, do arithmetic, and other skills? Will they be trained in morals and become responsible citizens.

Many of you know what it means, "Back to school", you are teachers or there are children in your home.

Now that we have established the idea "Back to school" which is common in our public schools, think about another school.

It is time for you to get "back to Sunday School!" Jesus has called us all to be his pupils. When we hear his voice, it is back to school for all of us. Jesus said, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me." This is a call to you "Back to Sunday School."

Your enthusiasm will add to others if you get back to Sunday School. It will be like an infection and spread a wonderful movement. It is a good time of the year for you to undertake a bold venture of faith in leading your whole family "back to Sunday School."

Someone has suggested that three things make up a good life. They are learning, yearning, and earning. We all know that learning develops our capacities. It takes hard work, discipline, and faith. It brings fullness and richness.

The person who has no inclination to learn more will be apt to think that

he knows enough. Why not get back to Sunday School and "get wisdom and understanding" - Prov. 4:5. Millions are going back to school, why don't you join them. 2 Tim. 2:15.

Oct 5, 79

## Pastor's Pen

Are you one hundred per cent? Some are ten per cent, others fifty, and a few one hundred per cent Christians.

Some refuse to serve the Lord in even a small way. The Church is calling for Youth Workers, and those who could fill the positions refuse to hear. The children need the best of guidance in Sunday School, yet men and women of ability pass the privilege by.

Being one hundred per cent Christian is different. That means as of this very moment you are one hundred per cent Christ's. It could mean that in the next hour, or year you will face some new situations in which your life will need to be surrendered yet more. Continuous surrender is the way to keep the percentage high as a Christian.

There is a story in the lives of the Disciples to illustrate this matter of being one hundred per cent. Matthew 4:18-22 tells how some men responded to the invitation for service. They took some very simple steps and each step brought them nearer the one hundred per cent rating.

First, they dropped their nets. "They straightway left their nets, and followed him." V. 20. You may have to drop that club meeting, or recreational habit, or some other activity in your life.

Second, then they left their boats. "They immediately left the ship." V. 22. They left the thing that hindered them, stepped out from behind the wall and said we are ready to serve you now!

Third, next they left their father. "And their father". V. 22. They did not use excuses of the family situation for neglecting their duty to God. Fam-

ily ties did not cause them to be satisfied with fifty per cent.

Fourth, they finally gave themselves. "And followed Him." V. 22. They let go of themselves and at Pentecost became one hundred per cent. The Holy Spirit unfolded new meaning in their lives. They served Jesus as they were directed by the Spirit. That is what it means by being one hundred per cent Christian.

Am I giving Jesus one hundred per cent? Is he getting the best of my service? Are my hands full of nets, boats, and family? Offer the prayer, "Lord, I desire to be one hundred per cent, free me from things, accept my surrender for your service today."

Sept 21, 99  
Pastor's Pen

"Be ye thankful" - Col. 3:15. Perhaps there was never a more thankful heart than the heart of Paul. You have to but think of him in the prison of Philippi, and singing praises there to God at midnight, to see how he had practiced what he preached when he urged the Colossians to thankfulness.

The people to whom this was addressed were mostly people in very humble circumstances. Most of them were slaves. At the best they were not a pleasant group. Their privileges were as few as their enjoyments. The true sympathy he offered them was encouragement.

Thankfulness, when you come to think of it, really depends upon our view of God. As is our God, so is our gratitude. If all that happens to us comes by chance, then of course, no man can be grateful. Gratitude is not a duty then, for there is no one to be grateful to.

Then came the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and everything is controlled by thankfulness. Love stooped from Heaven to the cross. Given such love, such individual love, and life becomes a different thing at once. At the moment anyone awakes to that love, and with all his heart believes in that, then gratitude is born. In everything there is the love of God.

Now, there is one other thing about thankfulness, it is the secret of true happiness. It is not the happy people who are happy. Happiness does not depend on what we have, else those who have most would be the happiest. As a matter of fact, how often do we find those that have the most are not the happiest? Happiness does not depend on what we have; it rather depends upon our point of view, and he

who has won the thankful point of view is always on the highway to a rich life.

A thankful heart remembers God and this puts music in your life.

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Sept. 7, 79  
Pastor's Pen

How broad should I be? I have heard people say I'm a Christian and that gives me all kinds of liberty. Others make a claim to being broad-minded in belief, they drift along with the crowd in prejudice and modern trends in religion. Many are trapped in living a self-indulgent life shackled by evil habits simply because they live by the principle of broad-mindedness. Some even reach the point of saying one religion is as good as another!

Is the Christ-like life a broad way? A man asked Jesus one day "Lord, are there few that be saved?" Jesus gave the man an answer, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in and shall not be able." On another occasion Jesus said, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth into life, and few there be that find it."

Jesus made it clear about the easy going mental attitude of being scatter-brained. If you turn from the broad way of the world you will discover "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." You have to yoke yourself to Christ and that brings a narrowing of the way.

Jesus never told Nicodemus you are broadminded. When asking the question, about the secret of life, Nicodemus received a very narrow answer, "One must be born of the Spirit." He wanted to find the truth and Jesus gave him the clear truth of a narrow gate for entrance into the Kingdom of God.

Therefore, what we believe may make a difference. We ought to be as narrow as the covers on the Bible, and as broad as the Spirit of Christ! The only breadth that should be found in us should be the "love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."

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Nov. 9, 79.

## Pastor's Pen

Sam made a turn about in a most unusual way. The change in his life perhaps had many contributing factors, but the key to his following Christ was unique.

My phone rang on a dark rainy night. Sam said, "Preacher, I need to talk with you, could you possibly come by my house?" I agreed to visit and hear about his urgent concern.

Sam told me in a moving way how the Lord had reached out and touched his life. I listened with great interest to his story of God's power. It sounded almost like Paul on the road to Damascus.

Very briefly, here is what he said to me that night as we were seated in the living room of his home. "I was on my way to the Liquor Store to get a bottle when the rain storm came up. I took shelter beneath the large columns of your church. While I was standing there waiting for the storm to slack up, I read the inscription on the outside wall. "This is the house of the Lord, enter into his gates with Thanksgiving and into his courts with praise." Psalms 100:4. "After I read that, God spoke to me. I decided it was time for me to make a change in my life. When the storm was over, I returned home with God instead of a bottle. Now, preacher tell me how I can get in the church and get my life straightened out."

Instruction was given and Sam followed the Lord in newness of life. He had a sweet Christian wife who had prayed for him many years. She was a faithful member of the church and set a good example for her children.

Sam Duval lived to be ninety-one and had great respect for the Almighty as long as he lived. Thank God men can be changed, lives can be turned around

and take a new direction. Perhaps you need to exchange some bad habit or evil for God!

Nov. 23, 79

## Pastor's Pen

What can I do? A question for everyone and yet without a simple answer. One day a certain humble minded man put to Phillips Brooks this question, "But what can I possibly do?" The great man replied: "You can furnish one faithful, Christian life."

What can I do? We can find the answer in Jesus. That is what he did, no more, no less. He furnished one faithful life. Any man who will open the gates of his life to the constant influence and presence of God can do something. Yea, there is no limit to what he can do.

Give thanks that you have one life to give. Bless God for the tender care and good gifts. Clyde McGee wrote some lines expressing Thanksgiving.

*For sunlit hours and visions clear,  
For all remembered faces dear,  
For comrades of a single day,  
Who sent us stronger on our way,  
For friends, who shared the year's  
long road,  
And bore with us the common  
load,  
For hours that levied heavy tolls,  
But brought us nearer to our goals,  
For insights won through toil and  
tears,  
We thank the Keeper of our years."*

I believe we can all answer the question "what can I do?" We can offer one faithful life in Thanksgiving to God for His many blessings of the year past.

Thanksgiving can be turned into Thanks-living. Be sure to attend church and furnish one Christian life! Your life will soon be past and never in the history of the world have we so needed faithful Christians. How will you deal with the question - what can I do?

To do nothing is sin, and sin is death.

Nov 30, 79

## Pastor's Pen

Why do you go to church and listen to a sermon? A working woman said, "The sermon cleans out the gutters of my mind."

We all stand in need of having the gutters of our minds perpetually cleansed. It is very much like the yearly task of cleaning the leaves from our gutters and yards. Huge piles of leaves can be seen on our streets in the early winter. Things are clogged up with the foliage.

Too many lives are encumbered with rubbish and spiritual channels are clogged. Such items as grudges, smoldering resentments, and lingering griefs. We hold onto and nurse these from day to day.

We need to be purged of unworthy things daily. Paul says in Ephesians 4, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the Devil." Hebrews 12:1 says, "Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which does so easily beset us." We are not to carry our besetting sin from one day to another. Prejudices, worries, and angry thoughts pile up in the mind.

It is great to begin each morning with "wrongs righted" and "scores settled." Weed out the undesirable from your mind. God is a master workman and He is at work upon your life today, and you can experience His presence in your life today. It is possible for you to come in touch with God and not have to wait until death or Heaven. If you will open the gate God will transform your life by cleaning out the gutters of your mind. He will change your very self into His own likeness. Paul says it will be "from glory to glory", from one stage to a higher stage.

This cannot be accomplished by us without God. It is only as we join God's power that the mind can be transformed. As the working woman said,

"I worship each week, the sermon cleans out the gutters of my mind."

Nov 7, 79

## Pastor's Pen

How much more do you need. For example you call yourself a Christian, now how much more do you need?

There are groups that come along and promise Christians "so much more." In fact, they tell you they have an inside line on spiritual things and that there is more to be had!

The Charismatic groups tell you they have a "full Gospel" with speaking in tongues, hand clapping, and turning around shaking hands plus other informalities.

Did you know that the Gnostics claimed this in the time of Paul? They said, "Christ is not enough." Christ alone is not sufficient for Salvation and the Christian life. You must add a few other rules, and we offer them to you in the name of the Scripture. We have a higher revelation and we offer you the kind of regulations a Christian should follow. Most of the time these folks will tell you that your church is not preaching the Bible and ordinary worship is formal.

How can a Christian evaluate the demands others seek to impose in the name of Christ? Paul helps you to answer those who fake religion. "They are of no value in checking the indulgence of the flesh." Col. 2:23. The Gnostic demands were very impressive, but powerless to stop "the indulgence of the flesh."

The diluting of Christian truth with popular words and modern emotionalism is sweeping the country. Folks demonstrate a rigor of devotion in cults and other things that fit their fancies, not from God's revelation. What is the purpose of some of these rules, is this the new highway to holiness? Read what Paul says in Colossians Chapter 2.

"He got religion," is the way people use to describe a person being converted. Verse 13-14 tells of an incompar-

able redemption. How can such an experience be inferior? Why would any man add one thing? Christ is the source of full life.