

Why This Waste?

(A sermon from the Rev. D. I. Purser, preached before the Carey Baptist Association, at Abilene, Clay county, Ala., Oct. 10th, 1883, and reported for the ALABAMA BAPTIST by J. J. D. Renfro.)

TEXT:—"To what purpose is this waste?" Matt. 26:8.

It was on an occasion when our Savior was in Bethany at a feast in the house of one Simon a leper, that these words were spoken. There came a woman—a lover of Jesus—one of the Marys, into the feast with an alabaster box of very precious ointment and poured it on his head as he sat at meat. You cannot read the story as found in the gospels without seeing its transcendent beauty; but the indignant objector was there, and the plausible question was raised, "To what purpose is this waste? for this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor." This box of spikenard was worth forty-five or fifty dollars, a costly sacrifice for a woman to make, and that too when there was no necessity for it. Jesus did not need it; the poor did need it; why such a waste? Matthew says, "The disciples had indignation," and raised this objection; Mark says, "There were some that had indignation within themselves and made the objection; but John says that 'the objection came from Judas Iscariot which should betray him.'" And all this only shows that the captious complaining of one bad man may implicate good men, and lead them for a time into the wrong spirit. But Jesus understood the matter, and boldly said that it was not because Judas cared for the poor that he urged the doctrine of waste, but because he carried the bag and had what was in it, and was a thief at heart.

But in the light of the usual objections to the benevolence of Christianity, I stand here to-day to urge the objection of Judas, or at least to ask you if it does not seem quite reasonable? I come as a citizen of state, as a minister of the gospel, as a friend of the poor, as a man in sympathy with the highest wants of the world, as a believer in economy, as a believer in money and as an enemy to waste, and I ask the question—and I urge that question, "To what purpose is all this waste?" I call this congregation of five hundred people to answer, every man for himself, in the sight of God and in view of the wants of the world, to what purpose is this waste which our religion demands every year and every day? Here you are according to your annual custom, having called men and women away from their homes and from the business of life. You have thirty churches in this body, and there are fifty-six white Baptist associations and about one thousand and four hundred churches in the State; at this season once a year they come together by delegates, leaving business, spending money, and with much fatigue and wear and tear, time is wasted, and secular life is neglected. To what purpose is this waste?

And then here is the Sabbath-school work with all of its expenses, and here are the costly church houses, and stoves, and Bibles, and hymn books. And here are their hundreds of ministers in the State to be supported, and the missionaries at home and abroad; and here are the visitors, these travelling preachers and agents and secretaries, who come to your churches and associations, and plead and beg and dog after you for money, money! To support all these and many more things, "too tedious to mention." To what purpose is all this waste? What good does it do? Could not the world get on very well without all this squandering of the people's money and time? We could use this money so much better. We could fix up our homes, we could dress our families better, we could get them luxuries, we could buy tobacco and whisky, and have a good time generally, and perdition we could do something for the poor, and at any rate we might fill the money "bag." To what use is this waste? Is it not a loss to the State, a loss to our civil rights, a loss to society, a loss to business, a loss to our families, a loss to the world? Our present practices are right or they are wrong; if they are wrong they ought to be abandoned. If the Judases are right and all this is waste, we ought to get up a universal "indignation" and put an end to this whole business, and send these begging preachers home and let them be gone forever. And rest assured, my hearers, that the Judases are still living; they have an unbroken succession. They are in almost every meeting; they love to go, especially to Baptist associations, and there objecting, and carping and croaking, they often put in their powerful plea, "To what purpose is all this waste?" They will tell you that it takes two-thirds of the money to get one-third to its destination. These agents and secretaries and boards get such large salaries—to what purpose is all this waste?

Take notice that it was Judas who made the objection in the text, and you must not fail to observe the successors of Judas.

Now, my friends, for the sake of fairness I sometimes speak on both sides of a question, and so here after all I take the side of Mary and assume that Judas was wrong. "Let her alone, she hath done what she could." True she hath broken the alabaster box of precious ointment over the head and feet of our blessed Lord, but it is not a waste! Whenever may be said about the vast cost of running the external machinery

of the religion of Christ, I declare that it is no waste—that it is a grand saving, and that without it everything goes to waste. Let us look into this great matter closely for it concerns every one of us. I assume that as the odour from the ointment of Mary's box of precious spikenard filled the house with its hallowed sweetness, so the salutary aroma of the offerings of God's people for the spread of the gospel, shall be a sacrifice of a sweet smell before the Almighty, and for all people a fragrance that carries salvation with it. It is not waste! This I propose to demonstrate by the use of four arguments; and

I. If we view the subject from a national standpoint, it is no waste. If I were a statesman with a national influence, or if I were at the head of a nation, and wanted my people to reach the grandest achievement in political economy, and the purest order of human happiness and prosperity, and the most lofty national glory, I would call upon them to fear God and keep his commandments, and to make an outlay of money and service equal to the demands of God's cause. Whatever might be held as relating to eternity, whatever the cost of the appliances used, if in harmony with God's Word, the expenditure cannot be a loss.

How was it with the Israelites? The order of God's law to them as a nation was that they should give a tenth of their increase. So long as they regarded and obeyed this law they had great national prosperity and became a mighty people. But when they began to inquire, "To what purpose is this waste?" and withheld the Lord's tenth, national ruin came, and they were led into captivity where they were held as prisoners for long ages, and where they could not sing the songs of Zion in a strange land, and where they were made to feel the keenest stings of national humiliation and of religious disgrace.

The history of the Israelites is the history of all nations. "Blessed is that nation whose God is the Lord." "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach unto any people." The greatness of our country, and of England, and of Protestant Germany, is the outcome of the degree of service rendered to God. The glory of the nation will be found to be in precise agreement with the degree of faithfulness in serving God and honoring his Holy Word. God has blessed our nation above them all, and from a national standpoint and for national reasons, the whole American people ought to give a tenth of all to God's cause. Voe to our land when our people and our government conclude that they can get along without God! Alas for our country when we shall assume that the cost of religious institutions is a waste! But I did not come to make a political speech.

II. And yet kindred to the above proposition let me remark, that if we look at the subject from a civil standpoint we shall see that all this is no waste. Get your people to keep God's law, to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, to love mercy, to do justly, and to walk humbly with their God, and then your jails will be useless, your court houses will only be needed to settle misunderstandings, there will not be needed a penitentiary in any state, the criminal code will be quite out of use, very much of legislation will pass away, and countless civil officials will have but little to do. But stop the advance of the religion of Christ, drive these ministers into secular life, close these church houses, and put an end to this business of raising money to carry forward the cause of the Redeemer, and let the Judas cry of waste prevail over the land, and we shall see jails increase, and all other places of imprisonment will also increase, crime will increase, and every branch of civil service will be debauched; taxation will be infinitely more crushing. There is not one dollar used to support religion in Alabama to ten dollars used for taxation growing out of crime. Christianity is the cheapest system of civil reform ever introduced to the world. The best way to lessen our taxes is to expend money in teaching men the principles of virtue and religion. We need courts, and law, and officials, and tribunals of equity and honor, but we must look to the influence of a pure Christianity to relieve us of the great civil burdens of life. Men plead their poverty and talk about the waste of religious institutions; you are not too poor to pay for trifles, not too poor to pay for luxuries, not too poor to pay taxes; but the same man will plead his poverty at the door of the house of God, and talk about waste.

III. But I remark that from a social standpoint it is not a waste to pay liberally to the support of religion. That is if we care anything about society for ourselves and families. Suppose you go into a neighborhood to purchase a home, and find the church houses fallen down, the Sabbath-school abandoned, the minister removed, and the worship of God given up, would you locate there? A man in the Mississippi bottoms was showing a land hunter his land. As they passed along their horses frequently got into deep bogs, and the land hunter cursed about it most profanely; but after awhile he inquired about the society in the region around; wanted to know about the churches and schools and preachers. The land owner replied, "I cannot see why you need to care anything about society—judging from your awful profanity I supposed you would not want society and churches and

the like." He replied, "I want society for my family; I am not willing to put my family where they cannot have good social advantages." A man may care nothing for himself, but when he thinks of wife and children, his feelings demand society for them. And he will conclude that there is no good society where the religion of the Bible does not exist. Where is a man worthy of the name, who would be willing to furnish his family a home where there are no Christian influences? If we want social blessings for our offspring after we are in our graves, we must sustain the religion of Christ at any cost. These boys and girls will fill our places in a few short years to come. We must expend liberally for religion now if we will give them such a chance as lies within our power. It is no waste to give one penny for social blessings. The rule of a tenth is the only rule that God has given for giving to his cause. The apostolic rule of giving as the Lord has prospered us is no exemption from the tithing rule, but is in spirit a reaffirmation of that rule. No man will find it any waste to give one-tenth. It will in every case be a paying expenditure. I knew a man to promise the Lord that he would give one dollar for every bale of cotton that he made. The first year he made nine bales and kept his promise; the second year he made nineteen bales with the same force and he kept his promise; the third year he made forty-six bales, and then came the test; he had bought some land and needed the money to help pay for it. He had a great struggle, but he kept his promise; and from that time he has gone on with that sort of liberality and has gotten to be quite wealthy, but he still gives as the Lord prospers him. It is not waste. The Lord loves a cheerful giver.

IV. But I have reasoned thus far from a temporal standpoint. Why should I longer detain this body with such a temporal view of this great subject? Why not address you as God's people, and invite you to consider the question in view of our spiritual blessings and as leading to our spiritual home? Stand with me and look over yonder to that house not made with hands eternal in the heavens!

"There is a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign;
Eternal day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain."
"There everlasting spring abides,
And never fading flowers."
In consideration of that home can we think of waste? I appeal to you—there is no waste in giving to the cause of him who hath prepared for us a place in the Mansions of that House.

In view of the value of the soul and the soul's eternal home, I insist most earnestly that there is no waste in all our outlay for the spread of the Gospel. "Jesus who was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich." He laid down his life for us; what have we done for him? I ask, is it possible to estimate the value of a soul? You examine a horse or a piece of land to estimate its value; will you examine a soul and tell me what it is worth? You who talk about waste are the men who underrate the soul. They that call on the vain world for help, and who live for the world, and complain about the expensiveness of religion, are utterly oblivious of the impulses of the heart of that minister of the Gospel, who gives his life in sacred consecration to the effort to save souls. As Jesus was sent into the world so he hath sent his servants into the world to save souls.

Again I ask, what is a soul worth? Will not anybody agree that the happiness of a soul in heaven is worth 50 cents a year, or one dollar a year? Ask those immortal spirits who have already been there hundreds and even thousands of years; ask those that are lost in the world of darkness, would it not be worth fifty cents a year to be in heaven? Very well, at this estimate when two million of years shall have passed away, one soul will have had one million dollars' worth of heavenly bliss! What then shall we say of the countless number of souls who gain heaven for eternal ages? They are company which can not be numbered; and

"When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We're no less days to sing God's praise,
Than when we first begun."
"Millions of years around shall roll,
Our song shall still go on."
Away then with this idea of waste. Away ye Judases; God help you and forgive you! Could you ask the great leader of modern missions—that grandest of missionary names—Carey, with which you have honored your own association, could you ask Carey the question, "To what purpose was the waste of thy toil and privation and sacrifice, and the contributions of thy brethren to sustain thee?" what would be his answer but that of Jesus concerning the spikenard of Mary? When the missionary had labored in the foreign field many years and large money had been expended, the news came home to England that one soul had been converted. One minister said to another, "Have we not paid too much for one soul?" The other replied, "No, if it were my boy it would not be too much." This is one way to look at it—what is my boy's soul worth? And what is my own soul worth?

An old Virginia preacher, when passing away, alluded to the value of the soul in view of its eternal career, and spoke of—
"Going over into that country,
Where the clock strikes once;
The pendulum swings—
'E'en forever! Never!"
And the clock strikes no more.

Can any man tell how old God is, and how old he shall be? It staggers the mind to attempt to think on such a subject.

"Imagination's utmost stretch,
In wonder dies away!"

And the soul must live while God lives.

"God's eternal years are her's."

And so it has pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. And it has pleased him to ordain that they who preach the Gospel shall live of the Gospel. Grand opportunities are before us. The most wonderful possibilities are within our reach. These mountains of Alabama are rich in untold deposits of coming wealth. They are soon to be overturned, and your lovely valleys are to rejoice and blossom as the rose, they shall blossom abundantly. Another fifty years and it will be impossible for any State to contain the overflow of its population.

Overcome Alabama, in all that constitutes the grandeur of material glory. The Baptists of the State must go forth with their boxes of precious ointment, and fill the land with the odor of their consecrated offices of love to man and love for God. We should meet the responsibility like men called of God to occupy till the coming of our blessed Lord. And then the whole world from the rising to the setting sun, cries, "Come over and help us." The knowledge of God and his Christ is to cover the earth, and we are parties to the glorious achievement. And behold how we already enjoy the blessings! You love and respect mother, wife, daughter, sister. Look at the women of our land. Here they are. How the Gospel has blessed these Marys and Marthas. But go with me into China, where after numberless ages woman is hid away as the mere slave and plaything of man. What makes this difference? O thou glorious Gospel of the blessed God, thou hast lifted woman to the work of Mary with her alabaster box! Where the Gospel is not, woman is down-trodden; where the Gospel is there is woman by the side of man, and springing forward to bless the world with holy anointing. Will any man turn Judas and say that it is a waste? No, brethren, it is no waste. Had I ten thousand lives I would give them to this cause. Working in this cause makes us happy. It thrills our hearts with joy here, and with the sublimest anticipations of the joy to come. I would say to these young ministers, Preach the word, give yourselves wholly to the work. Continue to preach to the very last. God is carrying you as lambs in his bosom. You have sowed the precious seeds in the morning of your lives, go now and sow in the evening. God will cause it to spring up and bear fruit when you are beyond the skies. It is no waste to labor for Christ; it is no waste to give to his cause. These "tears are bottled" in heaven. These labors will receive the plaudits, "Well done, good and faithful servants." These prayers and this money given will go up as a memorial before God. It is all right according to God's mode of reckoning values. It is no waste according to bank accounts. Bro. Bailey was pleading this great cause in North Alabama, and a poor widow with a large family, who supported her children by her own labors in the field, came forward with tears and claimed the privilege of putting her only 25 cents into the treasury of the Lord. Bro. Bailey told the story in another part of the State, and the people came forward uninvited and placed a handful of money in his hands to be sent to her. "Give and it shall be given to you, full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over." "He that gives grudgingly, shall also receive grudgingly." And that's the reason why we have so much leanness in the land and in the churches. Oh! what a blessed privilege to make for yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness! Will we ever again ask, "To what purpose is this waste of the ointment?" Will we not rather so live and give, that Jesus as he sits over against the treasury, will say of us as he did of Mary, "She hath done what she could." What a glorious immortality is this! It is not a waste! It is a good work wrought on the body of our adorable Master. Go thou and do likewise.

For the Alabama Baptist.

Christ Our Exemplar.

The duty of obedience to the divine commandments may be conceded, even when there is not a proper recognition of the demand on us for the exemplification of the pattern given us in the life of our Lord. The Christian should live in constant remembrance of Jesus as the Exemplar of his people. He is the Great Teacher come from God, and in the life which he lived we have an illustration of the reasons which he taught by the word of his mouth. Hence we are to follow Christ. The lives of the early Christians were supposed to be so many commentaries and exhibitions of the life of their Master. "For me to live is Christ," said the apostle; that is, for me to live is Christ to live again among men. He understood it to be his duty to reproduce the life of Christ in his own life. Those passages which speak of the church as the body of Christ seem to convey this idea; whatever else may be said of the church as the body of Christ, it was meant to give to the world a perpetual exemplification of the life which he lived, and the death which he died, and the triumph which he gained. However far short of it the early churches may have fallen, this exemplification was one of the grandest designs in their existence; and so it is

in a design in the existence of churches in all ages. Therefore we see how important it is that we shall have the life of our Lord ever before us. What was his mind, what was his spirit, what was his heart-work, and what did he do? are questions suggesting lessons to the Christian which we dare not neglect, and lessons which may be learned in the simple story of the New Testament. And since we find ourselves in the world and living on the world's bounty, the question presents itself, how are we to use the world as not abusing it; how are we to meet the obligations of secular life, and still conform to the example of our Lord Jesus Christ? And here we raise the inquiry, Did not Jesus himself use the world? Did not Jesus himself live in some measure conform to the world? While he was the Son of God, with the resources of heaven in his hands, it was as the son of man that he lived the life which his people are to exemplify; and as the Son of man he conformed to the necessities of life. He ate and he drank, he slept and he rested. He kept friendships, he accepted hospitalities; he was often in the society of sinners, and so complied with the innocent demands of social life. And yet he did not conform to anything sinful or harmful in the society of the world. When seated at the table of the Pharisees and sinners of distinction, he did not abruptly denounce the occasion, but gave them those instructions which should, forever control such festive occasions, and always made it a point to submit the rules of an order of righteousness equal, pure, and exalted. He is present at the marriage, mingling quietly with the people, and seizes the opportunity not to oppose the festivities of the hour, but to manifest forth the glory of God.

In the language of a great English preacher, "Jesus in the only true sense was a man of the world, a child of nature. In regenerating the heart and life he regenerates the world, changes man's attitude to the world, and lifts manhood to a plane where it can see that God has given us all things to enjoy in righteousness and in honor of God's glory." And so the Christian finds that he must observe society and business; but in business he is to provide things honest in the sight of all men; in society he is to keep himself pure and unspotted from the world; he must not be overtaken in the world's faults; he is to control himself in right-doing. If the world demands that he shall break away from Christian restraints, he is to resist the temptation, and assert his Christian manhood. He will find that every step of a life of conformity to the life of his Savior is elevating and strengthening. Every Model brings more of confidence, more of devotion to his Master, more of hope for the world's reformation, and more of desire to glorify God.

R.

Our Young Members.

Bro. Editors: I have just returned from a very pleasant and interesting session of the Canaan Association, held in Birmingham. A good many subjects pertaining to the advancement of Christianity were very ably and zealously discussed; yet my speech was not made, or the ideas which I thought could have been more appropriately expressed and more fully emphasized, namely: The work of young members. I say "my speech," I never speak in public; neither am I accustomed to writing for publications. However, important questions sometimes arise which cause me to desire ability to write. But to the idea. I notice that our churches send very nearly the same brethren every year to the association. Would it not be better to send about two or three each year who have never been delegates, along with the experienced and talented members? We are too much inclined to use the prominent members for every purpose, while the faculties of many who would be useful lie dormant; or if of an inquiring nature, finding nothing to do, they turn their attention to something of a more worldly character. If we desire the usefulness of a member we should not wait until his name has been enrolled five or ten years among the list of names, thus saying by our actions to him, If you do pretty well now, through these series of years, why then we will put you at something—elect you treasurer or Sunday-school teacher. I speak from experience and assure you that I was glad when the probationary years had come to a close, and I find plenty to do at present. There are not many who are ready to volunteer their services after they become members, since they assure us by the act of attaching themselves to the church that they are ready to do something for the cause of Christ. Churches should not neglect to utilize the talents of younger members and thus develop their piety.

H.

Springville, Oct. 10th.

A sight of Jesus cheers and comforts the dejected heart. "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." The heart of Andrew was lightened when he heard the ministry of John, and when he brought his brother Simon to Jesus, he, too, was made glad. With how light a bosom did the woman of Samaria go into the city after her interview with Jesus and call upon the people: "Come see a man, etc." It transforms the soul, making it conscious of the purpose of its immortality, shaking from off its wings the dust of earth, and stimulating them with an impatient daring to rise into the unseen.—Rev. Arthur Russell.

Unity Association.

The Unity Baptist Association convened with the church at Randolph on Friday, 5th Oct. The introductory sermon was preached by Elder G. W. Mills. Text, 1 Cor. 6:13.

Organized by re-electing old officers: Rev. J. Falkner, moderator; Rev. H. E. Longier, clerk; K. Wells, treasurer.

W. C. Cleveland, D. D., President State Board of Missions, was present and was received in his official capacity. He made a fine impression on all. The various objects fostered by the body received attention. There was a large delegation in attendance, who were hospitably entertained by the church and community. The next session of the body will be held with the church at Harmony, commencing on Tuesday before the first Sabbath in October, 1884.

Elder J. Falkner preached in the Baptist church at 11 o'clock a. m., Sabbath, and Bro. Giles, of the Shelby Association, at the same hour in the Methodist church. At 2 o'clock p. m. Bro. W. N. Huckabee preached in the Baptist church, and a call being made for a sermon in the Methodist church, Rev. W. H. Watson, pastor of the Baptist church at Randolph, was sent to perform that service. I heard Bro. Falkner in the morning. His text was Isaiah 9:6, 7. It was a good sermon. I also heard Bro. Watson in the evening. Text, John 6:26-40. He spoke for thirty minutes. Every eye was fastened on him. His analysis was plain, his arguments strong, and his conclusions appropriate. He made no allusions to himself, lost no time in making excuses, but earnestly presented Christ the "bread" and water of life to saint and sinner. He was followed by Eld. A. Andrews in a few happy remarks. The session of the body was one of the most successful ever held.

G.

A Better Plan Needed—Who Will Suggest it?

It is a question that has vexed my poll no little—How is the best way of introducing candidates for baptism into the church? When I applied for membership, many years ago, I came before the whole church, was required "to stand up and give a relation of the work of the Lord upon my poor soul," and answer any questions that might be asked.

"Most distinctly I remember" that I didn't say anything that I had intended to say, and went away from the church greatly mortified and embarrassed; yet I was twenty years old and had been in the habit of speaking in "Debating Societies," &c.

I thought then, I think now, that that method was not the best one, especially with timid females and Sunday-school boys and girls. They are generally much moved, embarrassed, often in tears, and will answer any leading question that pastor or deacon may ask them; and often answer it just in the way the interrogator wants them to. As to "standing up" and relating their experience in a straight-forward manner, it is out of the question, and pastors have measurably ceased to expect or require it. Why require what you can't obtain?

In my humble judgment we have a large per centage of unregenerated material in our Baptist churches and I think much of it comes in at doors too loosely tyed. The following will illustrate, and it is a real case; I saw it occur:

It was in a meeting of days, the feeling of excitement was running high, a good many were asking for prayer, reported conversions were numerous, "the door of the church was opened" daily. A little girl came forward and offered herself for baptism; no one knew her; her father and mother were not members of the church and were absent. The child could do nothing but sob and cry. The pastor asked her a number of questions, some of which she answered in the negative, others in the affirmative; he submitted the matter to the church—she was received and yet she made any profession of faith in Christ no one heard it. Would it not have been far better for the pastor to have had a rule requiring all persons wishing baptism to first confer with him and get his approval? or wouldn't a committee or judicious brethren before whom candidates should come and be examined, after having conferred with the pastor and having been approved, been still better? I have seen some things quite amusing and others quite ludicrous occur in presence of large congregations, where the examination of the candidate was had before the whole church in open meeting. A young man, grown up and with beard, had presented himself for examination, asking baptism; the house was crowded; many ungodly persons were present to take advantage of anything *mal a propos* and make capital of it. Among other questions propounded by the pastor, was the following: "How did you feel after you realized the pardon of your sins?" What was the astonishment of every one, the amusement of some and the mortification of the church when he replied, "I felt like I had just been born!" Would it not have been far better for a committee or the pastor to have asked and received the answer to that question in private? This case actually occurred, and he was received and baptized. If it is argued that this is an extreme case, I reply that there are a good many extreme cases in the land, almost every pastor has encountered some of them.

On another occasion, in relating

his experience, a young man was telling of a dream that he had had, upon which he founded his hope. "I dreamed," said he, "that I saw a great company of angels; they were about the size of turkeys sitting on the roost."

Now I submit that these talks of these young men before the congregation and outside world were not "unto edification," but rather damaging to the cause of the Master. "Let all things be done decently and in order," is the apostolic injunction; if the "decently" may be made to refer to the use of tobacco by Christians, and I think it may, the "in order" refers, among other things, to the loose and improper manner of many churches in receiving candidates for baptism.

I have referred to a committee whose duty it is to co-operate with the pastor and with him examine candidates upon their profession of faith; this plan is not free from objections, but is preferable to the one that I have discussed.

In some churches the whole question is left to the pastor; he converses in private with the applicants, advises them, satisfies himself and then, when the applicant comes before the church, he relates the experience for the applicant, and suggests to the church what is the best course to pursue. This plan has its objectionable features too—too much responsibility is laid on the pastor, especially if he be an ardent, sanguine man, always anxious to "count" new members.

I should like to have the best plan in this very important matter. Bro. Renfro has been pastor for a long time; will he favor us with an article in the ALABAMA BAPTIST? I hope he will.

HENRY.

Natchez a Field for Baptist Missions.

When the Master gave the great commission, we believe he intended exactly what is written, when he said, "Go disciple all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

And believing this is one of the great distinctive features of Baptist faith, and that this observing whatsoever the Master has commanded, entirely destroys the idea of nonessentials, for to observe and practice is obedience to the Master, is essential, perhaps, it behooves those who hold such faith to use exertions to teach it wherever there is a door opened, especially in a place where there are nearly 10,000 souls—such a place is Natchez.

The whole Baptist heart of Mississippi and surrounding States is stirred to its core to redeem Catholic New Orleans. So it has the same need from the same cause.

Natchez has a few tried Baptists who are reaching out to their brethren, and sending forth the Macedonian cry, "Come over and help us." It is a large field and the struggling few cannot occupy it.

Brethren, heed our cry. We are now trying to get a pastor, and we do believe that with a godly, earnest, practical pastor, a good work can be done for our Lord; and that a useful church can be built up here. But to build up and sustain the cause we must for a time have outside help. We make it our daily prayer to the great Head of the church to send us a pastor whose work he will bless in the salvation of souls.

W.

Copying My Lord's Likeness.

Leaving my desk and books early one forenoon in Florence I wandered out into the Piazza, which was glowing in the fervent rays of the bright Italian sun, and making my way across the Arno, landed at length in the gallery of the Pitti Palace, so justly celebrated for the wondrous gems of art that adorn its walls. Having been a familiar visitor to the place, and feeling somewhat in a passive, listless mood, my eye caught sight of an artist in an inner room whose quiet, earnest occupation immediately fixed my attention. She had planted herself before a picture which, by some strange oversight, I had scarcely ever previously noticed. It was rather small in size and quiet in coloring, and represented ideally the countenance of our blessed Lord. A look of deep, unspeakable sadness sat on the features, but the eye glinted with intense yearning and compassion. After gazing for awhile at this most moving picture, I began to watch the artist who was copying it. I could not but admire the care and patience she displayed in adding touch to touch with such a watchful, earnest, loving purpose, ever turning her eyes to the beautiful original, and absorbed in the task of endeavoring to reproduce, as faithfully as in her lay, a likeness of its loveliness.

A train of thought was awakened in me as I watched her. Not in this manner, but in another and a nobler way, am I too, called on to labor to produce a likeness of my blessed Lord. Not in lines and colors, on a canvas, but in the lineaments and features of my character is my own soul to be conformed to the reality of my Savior's living self. Shall I ever succeed, unless animated by a spirit of deepest love and admiration? Can I become like him, unless I be much with him, gazing on his glory and beauty, who is the chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely? Should I not ever compare myself with his bright example, and strive earnestly to be in all things as he was? The copy this artist will produce will, after all, be valueless compared with the priceless original; but to those who cannot see that original it will convey some faint idea of what its beauty is. So to the world

that sees not Christ, knows him not, and cares not for him—to that world I called upon to be a revelation of him, so that in me they may see a witness, faint and far off though it be, to the glory of the only-begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. I'll me dwell in thy heart with thee fill, when thou shalt appear, I shall be altogether like thee when I shall see thee as thou art.—*Evangelical Christian.*

Abuse of Words.

BY REV. M. K. CROSS.

Words sometimes get into bad places, and are held there for a long time. Not only words, but phrases, and whole sentences, are often made to serve impotently, or uselessly.

How often do we hear about "the great mass of the people," as if the very word itself did not mean a large proportion.

"The great Head of the church" is almost universal in religious writing and speaking. In Paul's time it was enough to say, "The Head of the church." Why should it not be enough now?

People are often said to be "in dead earnest," or "dead in earnest." But if one is really in earnest, why is not that sufficient? What force does the word dead add to it?

People listen, we are told how often, to some eloquent speaker "with breathless attention." How long can one really listen without breathing? Is there no other word but "breathless" to signify intensity of interest?

How many thousand times have we been told that a thing "does begin," when the fact is, it does begin, and does nothing more.

A new phrase has lately been started, which seems to be very popular, even among good writers, and threatens to have a long run, viz., "it goes without saying." If it goes without saying, why say it? they always do.

The old Grecian hyperbole is a useful and ornamental figure, in its place, but when used without discrimination it loses its force. Adjectives are convenient and useful, but they are used in such excess, generally, as greatly to diminish their force. You can safely skip one half of them, often more than half, especially descriptive and narrative words. We use superlatives when we need only positives, and positives when we need none. "The adjective so easily becomes exuberant," says the *Philadelphia American*, "that it needs careful curbing."

One of the worst abuses of this class of words is "very." A neighbor of mine often says, "very much indeed, very." The real meaning of the word has dropped out by excessive use, and so it must be repeated. It reminds one of the Frenchman's "grandissime, magnifique, pretty good."

And here is the fine word *cordial*, which has been made to do mental service so long, in extending invitations to oyster suppers, fairs, societies, and the like, for the benefit of churches, fire companies, and other benevolent societies, that its true meaning has quite vanished from many minds. On a certain occasion the writer was requested to prepare a testimonial to a retiring pastor, and wrote,—"We cordially commend him to the confidence of the churches," &c. The language was considered too weak for the occasion, and an effort was made to supplement it, as follows: "We cordially and affectionately commend him," &c. That is according to Webster, "with real affection we affectionately commend," &c. Which reminds me of the good deacon who generally closed his prayer with—"and finally, at last, may we," &c. And of his colleague deacon, who once prayed that his minister might be "A long and lasting blessing for a great while to come."

We recommend, especially to our young friends, whose literary habits are yet in a formative state, the careful study of our great American essayist, Ralph Waldo Emerson, simply to learn how many adjectives may be dispensed with without loss of strength, and with positive advantage. A look of the equally eminent Thomas Carlyle, to learn how many superfluous and clumsy adjectives a really vigorous and original writer can crowd into his sentences. James Russell Lowell gives an excellent rule in his "Fable For Critics," applicable not only in writing and speaking, but in many other ways, to almost all of us. He is describing one Who, with very good natural gifts, as a bard, Broke the strings of his lyre out by striking too hard. And cracked half the notes of a truly fine voice. Because song drew less instant attention than noise. Ah! men do not know how much strength is in noise; That he goes the farthest who goes far enough. And that all beyond that is just bother and stuff.

Open communion makes the Lord's supper a symbol of Christian fellowship. Its fundamental principle is that all Christians ought to commune together at the Lord's table. Open communion, therefore, not only subverts New Testament order by putting the Lord's supper before baptism and church membership, but perverts the Lord's supper itself, by making it the Christian's supper instead of the Lord's supper. Christ said, "Do this in remembrance of me." Open communion says, "Do this in remembrance of Christians. We prefer to follow Christ.—*Western Recorder.*"

Alabama Baptist.

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THE BOARD OF MINISTERIAL EDUCATION

earnestly beg those who have

promised to contribute to the support

of ministerial students at Howard

College, to forward the money, or at

least a part of it, as soon as possible.

The young men are now at the Col-

lege, and their bills are already due

for the first term. Do not delay,

brethren. The bills ought to have

been paid before this time.

THE UNITY ASSOCIATION made pro-

vision for the education of an excel-

lent young man who is preparing for

the work of the ministry. He will

attend a good high school in Verbena.

Bro. Wells will never regret his lib-

erality. Would to God we had a thou-

sand such men in Alabama.

To many it may appear entirely un-

necessary to write more on the sub-

ject of pastoral support. The in-

structions, the commands, in the

Scriptures are so plain, so positive,

and enforced by arguments so con-

clusive, that it seems scarcely possible

that any, even the careless reader,

could fail to comprehend the will of

the Master on this subject. Common

sense accords with Scripture, and

makes the necessity plain to any who

will reflect.

A man is called to the pastorate of

a church or churches. He obligates

himself to give time, and thought, and

labor to the work he undertakes. He

is unfaithful to God and to the charge

if he fails to meet the obligations in-

volved in the relationship of pastor

and people. He is unfaithful to God

and to those whom God has made

dependent upon him, if he fails to

provide for his family. How can a

pastor, unsupported by his people,

meet his obligations to the churches,

without failing to provide for those of

his household? How can he provide

for his family without neglecting his

duties to his charge? What right,

scriptural or otherwise, has a church

to demand or request the services of

any man without paying him for the

service rendered? Why is more ex-

pected of ministers than of any other

class of men?

Ministers of Christ are the most

important class among men and have

the weightiest responsibilities resting

and to labor for the salvation of souls.

In a word they perform all the duties

of pastors. In many cases they do not

receive two hundred dollars for ser-

vice faithfully rendered. Some do

not receive one hundred dollars.

They must labor hard for "a living."

They have no money with which to

buy papers, periodicals and books.

They have little time for study and

self-improvement. They find them-

selves falling behind, ceasing to be

effective as preachers, and pastors.

Many of them, after years of anxious

toil, become discouraged, and with

aching hearts abandon the ministry,

and do their duty in providing for

their wives and children. Often and

again our heart has been burdened

as we have communed with some of

these earnest, humble men of God.

We would do what we can for their

relief. Churches owe it to God, to

the cause of Christ, to themselves,

to their families, to the world, to

provide an adequate support for the

pastors who are willing, wishing, to

give themselves fully to the service of

the Lord in the employ of the churches.

We plead for true, earnest men

with whom we have talked and wept

and prayed, men who feel that they

have been called of God to preach,

who are willing to suffer and sacrifice

in responding to the call, true men who

dare not neglect the first and highest

obligation resting upon them, the ob-

ligation of providing for their own

households.

We appeal to the people of God in

many parts of Alabama, and urge them

to improve the state of things now

existing in this connection. We may

have something more to say on this

subject soon.

THE Shelby Association met with

the church at Calera Oct. 13. Rev.

I. U. Wilkes, moderator; Rev. C. W.

O'Hara, clerk. The organization of

the body was completed Saturday

morning and the afternoon was de-

voted to the consideration of the sub-

ject of missions. We were delighted

with the cheerful promptness with

which the association responded to

all the appeals made. The appor-

tionment suggested by the Board was

adopted, and a permanent colportage

fund, the P. T. Holcombe fund, was

raised in five minutes. Rev. T. P.

Holcombe is the son of Hosea Hol-

combe, for a long time one of the

most useful ministers in Alabama.

We all regretted that Bro. Holcombe

was prevented, by sickness, from at-

tending. Saturday night Bro. Lee,

who was appointed to preach the in-

troductory sermon, urged a visiting

brother to render this service. He

did the best he could. Sunday a

large congregation listened attentively

to an excellent sermon from the mod-

erator, Bro. Wilkes. Sunday after-

noon Dr. Chambliss preached an

impressive sermon. Sunday night

Bro. Renfro delivered a most in-

structive and interesting sermon.

The association expressed its

most emphatically in favor of a the-

ological professorship and will do its

full share in supporting it when es-

tablished. Bro. Teague came Sun-

day evening and with us Monday.

Bro. O'Hara, Dison, and Mills

impressed us as earnest, faithful men

of God with whom we will be glad

to associate.

The church at Calera under the

leadership of Bro. Thomason, is

growing and promises soon to be one

of our best churches. They are now

engaged in the effort to build a house

of worship with hopeful prospects.

Mr. Breazeale of the "Vanderbilt"

entertained us most hospitably during

our stay in Calera.

Monday morning while brethren

were delighted and instructed as he

made us to understand the mysteries

of making jugs, jars, &c.

Bro. Bailey was himself and pressed

all the interests he represents with his

usual vigor and earnestness.

The church at Beulah needs a more

comfortable house of worship.

ROVINGS AMONG NORTH

ALABAMA BAPTISTS.

After the adjournment of the Mus-

cle Shoals Association the thought

was suggested that it might be a mat-

ter of some profit to touch at some of

the centres of interest in this North

Alabama region.

ATHENS

was the first point visited. The Bapt-

ist cause in this town is quite weak;

but a few faithful ones remain in the

midst of a population where other

denominations largely hold sway.

A delightful hour was spent with

the interesting family of Prof. Moore.

They are in anxious expectation of a

visit from Bro. Purser, as his services

had been promised. They seemed to

think that a visit from our evangelist

would give a new impulse to the

cause at that place, and we shouldn't

wonder. Thence we went direct to

HUNTSVILLE

where we found the city full of visit-

ors in attendance on the Fair. This

occasioned excitement enough, but

when on the night before our arrival

a negro had been taken from the jail

by an armed mob, and hanged in the

yard, the excitement ran to a much

higher pitch. This negro was one of

two who had murdered policeman

Street the day before, while he was

attempting to arrest them. The

murder of this officer occurred near

the home of a black woman who

handed the axe to one of the men to

strike the blow while the other held

him fast. One of the men escaped,

one was hanged, and the woman was

lodged in jail. On the night of our

stay in the city, threats were made

that the woman should also hang, and

the Madison Rifles were ordered out

to protect the jail. The result was

no violence was attempted.

LYNCH LAW

is coming into fearful popularity in

this country of ours, and nothing can

be more calamitous to any country

than the prevalence of such a prac-

tice. If it is right in its execution in

one instance it is right in every other,

and that means the wildest anarchy.

The public conscience is too much

blunted upon this point. No matter

what men may say in vindication of

such a practice, it is murder in its

very essence, and cannot be raised

above this criminal plane. The

press both secular and sacred, can-

not too strongly denounce such a

crime as lynching.

OUR CAUSE AT HUNTSVILLE

seems to be in a flourishing condition.

Pastor Kone has taken on a new

lease of energy since his brilliant suc-

cess in capturing his attractive Vir-

ginia bride; at least this is what "they

say." Ordinarily genial and sunny

hearted, we thought Bishop Kone was

unusually so during the few hours we

were with him. He was exuberant in

his description of the progress which

he was making there, and from other

sources we had occasion to learn of

his large congregations both in his

preaching and prayer-meeting service.

Kone is a growing man, and with the

advance of time he is taking a firmer

hold upon his people and town. His

church last year paid \$300 to the dif-

ferent objects fostered by the denom-

ination. Mrs. Kone, whom we met

for the first time, seemed as glowingly

interested in the cause there, as her

enthusiastic husband. We learn that

a quiet but profound spiritual influ-

ence is pervading the Baptist congre-

gation there, at all times. Quite

an interesting incident

was related with respect to a young

man who had joined the Baptist

church only a short while before.

Without the slightest demonstration,

the Chief of Police of Huntsville

arose after the close of a given ser-

mon, and offered himself for mem-

bership with the church. According to

his own statement his life had been a

most reckless and wayward one. Only

one year ago he had breathed out

threatenings of violence against

pastor Kone who had baptized his sister,

who had left the Episcopal church in

order to join the Baptists. But by

