

THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY.

VOL. III.

OCTOBER—NOVEMBER, 1923.

Nos. 10 & 11.

Crowned Dirt and Profanity.

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An unlovable spirit is revealed occasionally in the *Nation*. Formerly the refined, exquisitely critical, high-toned weekly visitor to exclusive circles of cultured Americans, the stanch and fearless defender of the great American liberties, the arbiter in the realm of literature, art, drama, statesmanship, whose praise was coveted and prized by men of letters and men of affairs, while its censure was dreaded as a blight to budding genius, this journal has lately championed radicalism and modernism, boldly advocated birth control, and lent itself to spreading propaganda literature for this destructive sexual aberration in modern life. Its most revolting escapade, however, was the selection, on February 14, of Stephen Vincent Benét's *King David* as the *Nation's* prize poem for 1923. The poem has for its theme the nasty David-Bathsheba incident. It was selected from four thousand manuscripts by about fifteen hundred writers. If *King David* was the best in this lot, we have no desire to see the second best or the third best.

The poem is in six cantos. Episode No. 1 pictures David surfeited with wealth and power, singing to his "hook-nosed harp":

The Lord is a jealous God!
His violent vengeance is swift and sharp!
And the Lord is King above all gods!

Blest be the Lord, through years untold,
The Lord who has blessed me a thousandfold!

Cattle and concubines, corn and hives,
Enough to last me a dozen lives.

Plump good women with noses flat,
Marrowful blessings, weighty and fat.

I wax in His peace like a pious gourd,
The Lord God is a pleasant God,
Break mine enemy's jaws, O Lord!
For the Lord is King above all gods!

Church-Workers; How to Obtain and Keep Them.

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The Church of Christ has a work to do. In the execution of it she needs all the support that earnest hearts and willing hands can give. If our congregations are to take their proper share in this work, if they are to maintain their ground, still more, if they are to increase their influence in the community, they must be brought to a lively realization of this. And yet it is not too much to say that the great bulk of our people grow up apparently unconscious of the fact that they are members of a living, organized society, and that certain duties devolve upon them as their share, that they grasp their responsibilities very imperfectly or not at all. There are numbers in our churches whose powers for good are all dormant, who sing lustily that they are "soldiers of Christ," but are always in winter quarters. There are those whom the Savior designates as "idlers in the Lord's vineyard," the drones in our hive of ecclesiastical life. Their talent, divinely given, is wrapped in a napkin and buried away in the earth. Now, the question which we propose to consider is how the sense of responsibility can be awakened amongst our people, how we are to enlist their active sympathies and energies in the service of the Church.

It is obvious that, if in any congregation the only exhibition of church-work is that which is afforded by the public worship of God on the Lord's day, the feeling will naturally grow that there is no church-work in which the membership can take a part. To conduct the public worship of God is the peculiar province of the called minister, and this is a province upon which the laity has neither the ability nor the disposition to enter. The first consideration, then, is that we must make it quite clear that *there is a work for our people to do.*

The one person, above all others, upon whom this impartation of knowledge devolves is the pastor. He is the shepherd of the flock, and his duty is both to feed and lead it. Him especially has Christ entrusted with every soul in his church, and He has commanded him to train and develop that soul into highest possible Christian character and life. This is the weakness of many a pastor's ministry. He does not know how to put his people to work. He lacks executive talent. He tries to do the work of all the church himself. He cannot do it. It is a spiritual injury to his people to try to do it. A wise pastor pursues a different course. He tries to get all his people to work. But *how?* There

is but one true answer: Use only the agencies and methods appointed and evidently approved by God.

1. First among these is the faithful preaching of the Word of God in regard to the right use of gifts. We must, as pastors, present clearly what, in this special respect, is Christian duty; we must show to those under our instruction that every grace, and gift, and possession, and influence, and opportunity, and possibility of good has come to them as a trust from God, that their first obligation is to use them for the glory of God, and that God will hold every man strictly accountable for all that He has conferred upon him. Let there be clear and ringing testimony offered; the claims of God pressed on the conscience: "Thus saith the Lord, Pay what thou owest"; judicious, brave, and loving appeal.

2. However, public address often fails to meet the end; hence this advice will not be amiss: Go to your members and between you and them alone, kindly, plainly, and earnestly, lay specific Christian duty upon their conscience. Be wise enough and brave enough to point out just what, with their gifts and their education and their wealth and their opportunities, they can and ought to do for Christ, His Church, and for souls.

3. Again, through organization. In the forming of any organization for the accomplishment of any specific form of religious duty, we simply, as pastors, say to our people: Here is a special and wise and Scriptural method of glorifying God, a way in which you will do more for Christ, and do it easier and more joyfully, than if alone. Hence the value of the organizations in our midst, all of them under the direct supervision and control of the congregation and its pastor.

4. Once again, there is the wisdom of circulating freely religious literature and especially denominational religious literature. In every home in our churches our church-papers and periodicals should be found. In order that our people become interested, as they ought, in missions, in church extension, in ministerial education, in colleges, in our theological seminaries, in all our agencies of Christian activity, they must first be informed in respect to them. It is surprising what response such presentations bring. Our people are a thoughtful people, governed by conviction and conscience, ready to do their duty when once assured that it is their duty, but not much disposed to do it before they are thus assured.

These are some of the methods or means.

A FEW HINTS. — *Hint One.* As the apostle declares: "Every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner and another after that." In a church one member has the talent of song or music; another, of fluency and effectiveness in public address; another has financial talent; another has attractive social qualities; another is adapted to be a teacher in the Sunday-school; another, to labor among the young; another, to solicit funds; another, to stand at the church-door, and smile, and shake hands with, and welcome, strangers — the greatest conceivable variety of gifts and of possible individual usefulness. Let every church and its pastor take an inventory of its stock in trade and find out just what it possesses. This self-knowledge is a first step toward efficient church-work. We shall be surprised to learn how rich in spiritual resources our congregations are, with what fine talents God has gifted our membership, and what possibilities of usefulness reside in them. Take, *e. g.*, the fine talent of Christian womanhood.

Hint Two. There is work to be done suited to all capacities, stations, and attainments. The privilege of working for God is not to be denied even to the poorest and humblest among us. Let the less favored in means and education and external gifts fully understand that they have their part also to fulfil, and that their aid is warmly welcomed. Where there is devotion, energy, and zeal, it makes up for deficiency, and it will almost invariably be found that as they gain confidence in themselves, such persons grow in power and become exceedingly valuable.

Hint Three. In order to get church-workers, one must be content to wait. All our efforts and persuasions will sometimes fail to arouse those who are advancing in years and have become accustomed to their regular routine of religious life, from which nothing can move them. We must therefore look to those who are growing up under us. The season of confirmation gives an invaluable opportunity for setting this matter in its proper light. Let our catechumens be taught to look forward to confirmation as the time when they shall gain a new position in the church as workers, and urge them to associate that solemn season in their memories with consecration to Christ and His service.

Hint Four. It may not be amiss to add: In order to get zealous and faithful workers, we must be zealous and faithful workers ourselves. The pastor is the observed of all observers. Our members are, one and all, sharp and eager critics. Our example in our own work will always be the most powerful in-

centive and stimulus to those around us. There is nothing in this world so contagious as reality, earnestness, and enthusiasm.

But when our workers have been found, it must not be supposed that nothing further remains to be done. It demands no small amount of a pastor's watchfulness and anxiety to keep the workers he has. How, let me occupy the remaining moments to answer, how may the permanence and the efficiency of the working band be maintained? There is peculiar danger besetting voluntary or unpaid work. The same persons who would disdain to be thought negligent or unpunctual in the performance of any ordinary business engagement, often appear to have a lower standard by which to regulate their voluntary duties. Now it ought to be clearly laid down that what is required is not play, but work — work that demands the exercise of self-denial in its due performance, that it is not to be postponed for the sake of pleasures which would never be suffered to interfere with business engagements. If the work has been undertaken freely, it is all the more important that it should be conscientiously performed. The service of a slave who is compelled to perform his daily task may be expected to lack enthusiasm and energy, but when a duty is undertaken, not of constraint, but willingly, there ought to be no doubt that it will be faithfully, diligently, and zealously carried out. And, above all, work for God demands the employment of our highest powers and most devoted zeal and will meet with His blessing and reward. This is a feature which must be constantly emphasized.

Let your workers feel that they are trusted. By this is not meant that our confidence should go to the extent of leaving them altogether to themselves. The pastor is present with, and ever cognizant of, what is being done by his workers. All activity comes under his immediate observation. Yet all this is consistent with implicit confidence that they will try to do their best, that their inevitable failures and mistakes will meet with no harsh and unsympathizing judgment of his lips. Rules, however good and necessary, must not be enforced with the strictness of military despotism. "Forbearing one another and forgiving one another" is a rule which is needed to guide the intercourse between Christian workers and their minister. It is impossible to work cheerfully and freely if there is a feeling of perpetual interference and domineering superiorism. On the contrary, let us not be slow in giving recognition. Much inspiration will be lost unless the performance of the duties be recognized. In the church-paper, annual,

meetings of the church officers and congregation, a word of acknowledgment or a letter of appreciation goes a far way to keep interest and zeal alive. Nor would an occasional social gathering be out of place.

Another thought offered for your consideration: Loyalty to the individual church. Without wishing to say anything that may appear selfish or illiberal, I would say this: I am persuaded that the best workers are those most devoted to their own particular congregation. A partial member I can understand and respect; a half-hearted one who brags on his church one day and vents his carping criticism on it the next is not at all to my taste. Partiality in this respect is to add intensity and efficiency to the work. A worker who is manifestly out of harmony with his surroundings ought to leave them.

In conclusion I would state that what has been said is the result of experience rather than of reading of books on this subject. With all the attending failures, difficulties, and shortcomings that connect with our ministry, I am assured that we shall have no reason to regret any amount of pains and labors spent in our endeavor to give a practical solution to the question: How to get church-workers, and how to keep and treat them.
