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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST

BAPTIST OFFICIAL STATE PAPER

VOLUME 48

LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS, MAY 26, 1949

NUMBER 21



—H. Armstrong Roberts.

*"School days, school days,
Vacation Bible School days—
Bibles and worship and reverent prayer,
Music and handwork and stories rare.
Vacation Bible School days!"*

From the Editor's Desk

A Realistic and Christian Approach

We publish on this page a report of a meeting of the heads of our Baptist Institutions of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. According to the report, this was a voluntary meeting for fellowship and for discussing mutual problems and needs with a view to a better understanding and greater unity among these institutions.

It is our opinion that this is one of the most significant meetings held among our institutional leaders in many years, and, if followed up, it can lead to a greater degree of unity and co-operation than we have heretofore realized.

This meeting recognizes, at least implicitly, that the Arkansas Baptist program is a unified program; that every institution, agency, and interest in that unified program has an allotted place in the hearts of Arkansas Baptists, in their promotional plans, and in their financial provisions. Since this is true, every institution and agency is a component part of the whole and is related to every other institution and agency on a co-operative basis.

"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. . . . And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you." As Paul here illustrates, each member institution and agency of our denominational program has its particular responsibility and opportunity only in full and complete co-operation. It may also be as truly said of our denominational members as of the members of our physical bodies, "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it."

Our member agencies must promote each other if we are to achieve the Kingdom objectives to which we Baptists are committed; and the success of each will contribute to the success of all the others.

We should have more such meetings as that reported by Superintendent Seefeldt. For the better we understand the needs, the problems, the challenges, and the objectives of all the other agencies, the better will we be able to co-operate in the whole program of our Convention.

—000—

Admitting the Truth

Protestant processions in Spain "would be as unwise as a rally staged by American Catholics in the heart of the KU KLUX KLAN belt in the South," according to Pablo Merry del Val, cultural counselor to the Spanish legation in Washington, D. C.

We wonder if that was a slip of the tongue, or if Merry del Val meant to admit all that his statement implies? For according to his statement, Catholics of Spain are as intolerant toward Protestants as the KU KLUX KLAN is toward Catholics. And from all accounts of the situation in Spain, that seems to be a true picture of religious intolerance in Spain.

—000—

Wisdom and knowledge bring increased responsibilities; so if one is unwilling to assume responsibilities, his knowledge becomes a source of grief instead of joy.

Another Chapter Organized

It is encouraging to note that local chapters of Protestants and other Americans United for the Separation of Church and State are increasing. A local chapter was recently organized in Cincinnati, Ohio. Dr. Glenn L. Archer, P. O. A. U. national director, outlined the objectives of the organization and urged the organization of other local units throughout the state and their co-ordination into a state-wide chapter.

We hope that some interested group will start a movement to organize local chapters in Arkansas.

We are publishing in three installments, the first in the next issue, an address delivered by Dr. Archer to the Associated Church Press at their thirtieth annual meeting, in which he sets forth the dangers which call for the organization of Protestants and Other Americans United and the purposes of the organization. Be sure to read these installments.

A Significant Fellowship

By H. C. Seefeldt

The heads of Arkansas Baptist institutions met together in Little Rock Tuesday for fellowship and to develop a closer relationship among our institutions. The men who are placed at the head of our institutions and have the responsibility of administering the affairs of these institutions have long felt the need of meeting together to discuss their mutual problems and responsibilities, and to plan and pray together for a greater degree of unity, and correlation among the institutions of our Convention.

We realize that every institution must recognize the needs of all the other institutions of our Convention, if the desire and purpose of Arkansas Baptists are realized in adequate provision for every interest represented in our denominational program in the state; and if the over-all program of our Convention and Executive Board is to be effectively promoted.

It was with this purpose in mind that the heads of our institutions met for fellowship and for discussion of our mutual interests and needs. Ouachita College was represented by President J. R. Grant, Central College by President Irving M. Prince, Southern Baptist College by President H. E. Williams, Arkansas Baptist Hospital by Administrator J. A. Gilbreath, Bottoms Baptist Orphanage by Superintendent H. C. Seefeldt.

A second meeting was planned for and the chairman of each board of trustees will be invited to attend.

Next Week

A full report of the Southern Baptist Convention will begin in the next issue of the *Arkansas Baptist* and will continue in subsequent issues. An eight-page issue this week has permitted both the Editor and Editorial Assistant to attend the sessions of the annual conference of Baptists from 21 Southern states held in Oklahoma City, May 18-22. Several hundred Arkansas Baptists were in attendance.

The Unhidden Christ

A Devotion by the Editor

"But he could not be hid."

Jesus had been under a terrific strain during His Galilean ministry. His fame had reached every nook and corner of the land. The demands upon His time and energies were more than His human powers could well stand. At least He felt the need of getting away from these demands for a short period of rest. A second purpose seems to have been to teach the disciples, which had been very difficult with all the popular demands that had been made upon His time. The multitudes thronged Him and the opportunities to give personal instruction to the disciples were practically crowded out.

So Jesus with His disciples went over into Syria, hoping to have a little rest and freedom from the thronging crowds. He entered into a house, where He hoped to remain in comparative seclusion for a while. But it is positively stated that He could not be hid. Wherever He went it was known and the needy, suffering humanity followed Him seeking health and happiness and peace.

There was something about Jesus that seemed to flash and glow, so that no matter where He went He attracted attention. In any company His presence was noticeable.

I remember once waiting for a train in the Tenth Street Station in Louisville, Kentucky. Presently a man entered the station and walked through at a brisk pace. Every person in the station turned and looked at this man as he walked through. There was something about him that attracted and held one's attention. Everyone wanted to know who this man was. Upon inquiry it was learned that he was the president of the Rail Road Company. No one was surprised at this information. In fact, everyone knew that he must be some important person because you could see greatness written in every feature and expressed in every movement.

When Napoleon had conquered practically all of Europe, he was in Germany and in conference with a group of his chiefs. It had been his desire to meet Goethe, the great German philosopher and poet. One day Goethe came to see Napoleon. The great general saw him for the first time as he stood framed in the doorway and he said, "There's a man."

It was like that, only more so, with Jesus. To see Him was to know at once and unmistakably that He was not an ordinary man. He could not be hid.

"And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but he could not be hid" (Mark 7:24).

ARKANSAS BAPTIST

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B. H. DUNCAN, EDITOR
MRS. LESLIE W. BUCHANAN, ED. ASST.

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Articles carrying the author's by-line do not necessarily reflect the editorial policy of the paper.

Kingdom Progress

Arkansas Winners

Ten associational clerks in Arkansas won awards in the 1948 Better Minutes Contest conducted by the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, as announced by Porter Routh, Secretary of Survey and Statistics.

The award winners as announced by Mr. Routh are:

Superior: S. A. Wiles, Malvern, Central Association; L. C. Tedford, Corning, Current River Association; Mrs. N. P. Cartwright, Paragould, Greene County Association; Tillman T. Newton, Rison, Harmony Association; and R. O. Ekrut, Strong, Liberty Association.

Excellent: Wesley A. Lindsey, Monticello, Bartholomew Association; M. L. Wallis, Hatfield, Ouachita Association; and H. B. Donnell, Nashville, Little River Association.

Good: John B. Stephen, Prairie Grove, Benton County Association; and Ralph T. Grigg, Gassville, Washington-Madison Association.

Many other minutes were very fine, but the clerks were not able to submit them for the contest because of printing and other difficulties.

On May 5 a Training Union banquet was held at the First Church, Lake City, with Ralph Davis, State Training Union director, as the main speaker. A. M. Norton is pastor, and Fred Carter is Training Union director. The Lake City Training Union has been standard for a longer period than any other Training Union in Arkansas. During the month of April this Training Union had a gain of 62 members which brought their enrollment to 271. This increase in enrollment was made possible because the Training Union planned their work and then worked their plans. First definite goals were set up by departments, and during the month of April four new unions were organized, including one silent union for the deaf.

During the month of April there was an average attendance of 274, with an average grade for the entire Training Union of 89 per cent. Sixteen Unions and Story Hours, with eleven of the Units being standard for the past quarter. Four of the five departments were standard.

During a recent Stewardship revival at Lake City there were 161 tithers cards signed and of this number 126 were enrolled in the Training Union. With one exception, all of the deacons are enrolled in the Training Union.

The First Church, Alma, L. E. Cunningham, pastor, conducted a school for deacons May 9. All the pastors and deacons in Clear Creek Association were invited, and supper was served at 7:00 p. m. Dr. T. H. Jordan, First Church, Van Buren, brought the message on the qualifications and duties of deacons. There were 75 pastors and deacons in attendance. W. D. Patton, Chairman of the Board of Deacons of the Alma Church, says, "Every pastor and deacon attending this meeting was greatly benefitted, and each church represented will have better service from their deacons. We think that other churches and associations could profit from such meetings."

A Visit to Newport

By B. V. Ferguson

The writer had the privilege of leading in a revival meeting with the First Church, Newport, recently. The purpose of this article is not to tell the results of the revival, though it was indeed a gracious meeting, but to speak of the position the church holds in the community.

This was the writer's first visit to Newport for services with the Baptists there. The Baptists of Newport are one of the finest companies of Christians that I have ever had the privilege of working with. We have not been anywhere in the state of Arkansas, or in other states, where the Baptists have erected a finer and more convenient sanctuary for worship and for Christian service than the saints at Newport have. They have come a long way since Charles Wilkins became pastor there fourteen years ago. If he had accomplished nothing else than leading that congregation to erect this fine building, and put the Baptists in the forefront, his success would have been imminent.

Their new church building is in the heart of the city and is superior to any other church edifice in the town. The Baptists are not only looking up, but they are looked up to. They have the respect of the people of Newport.

We were happy also to find a united front. The congregation has a great Christian spirit of unity. They possess the forward look and in every respect are aggressive. In our stay of some ten days we never heard a note of discouragement, discord, or discontent.

Pastor Charles Wilkins is the leader, and they appreciate him. He has done a great work and the church realizes it. They are following his leadership to a man. We predict great things in that section for the First Baptist Church and its influence throughout the community. Our hearts rejoice always to see the Baptists taking the field.

Christian Home Week was observed in the First Church, Pineville, Louisiana, April 24-May 1. Dr. Joe W. Burton, editor of "Home Life" was guest preacher for the week. Thirty-eight people united with the church during the week, thirty-one of whom came for baptism. More than 200 homes were dedicated and family altars established. This was one of the most significant weeks in the history of the church according to Dr. R. Houston Smith, pastor.

Hymn Sings and Music Schools

The following associations held Hymn Sings during April: Pulaski County, South, Southwest, and West Zones, held at Ironton, Crystal Hill, and Brady Churches, respectively; Central Association, held at the First Church, Benton; White River Association, First Church, Cotter.

Music schools were conducted at Clarendon, by Mrs. B. W. Niningger, State Music director; at West Side Church, El Dorado, Liberty Association, by Mrs. Ralph Reasor, associational music director; and at Pleasant Hill Church, Benton County Association, by S. O. Reynolds, associational music director.

Licensed to Preach



J. C. Myers

J. C. Myers was recently licensed to preach by the Park Place Church, Hot Springs, where D. C. Bandy is pastor. Mr. Myers plans to enter Ouachita College next fall.

Progress at Jacksonville

There have been 501 additions to the First Church, Jacksonville, during the four years and seven months of Pastor H. W. Ryan's leadership. Pastor Ryan came to the Jacksonville Church October 1, 1944. The attendance in Sunday School has increased from 75 to the high mark of 367; the Training Union from 40 to 215; the offerings from \$70 a week to \$250 a week. The church is now giving ten per cent of its income to the Cooperative Program.

A great climax was reached in an eight-day revival April 17-24, in which Nelson Tull, State Brotherhood Secretary, did the preaching and Roland Leath, educational director of First Church, Little Rock, led the singing. There were 67 additions to the church membership, 41 of these coming by baptism.

During the four years and seven months that Pastor Ryan has been with the Jacksonville Church, the physical equipment has been enlarged to provide greater facilities for Sunday School work and for the other organizations. An Intermediate Department with assembly room and eight class rooms has been provided; also a dining room and kitchen, a Primary Department with assembly room and eight class rooms, and Nursery Department. A butane heating system has been installed, also a cooling system. All this enlargement has been accomplished without involving the church in debt. Four lots adjoining the church have been purchased and paid for, upon which will be constructed a new church auditorium, which is to be the next project undertaken by the Jacksonville Church.

Three deacons were ordained at the Sunday morning worship hour, April 17, at the South Highland Church, Little Rock. They are: C. M. Noyes, B. A. Treadway, and James Vaughn.

Pastor Ray Branscum and the deacons of the church formed the ordaining council.

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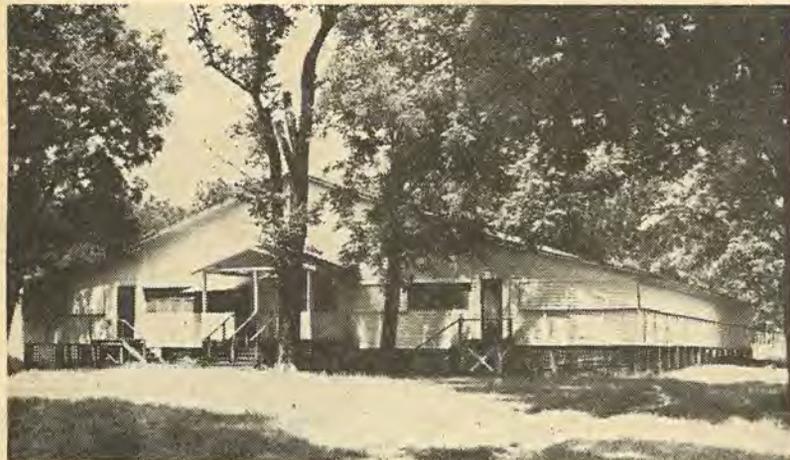
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Religious Education



Assembly Dining Hall

Mrs. George D. Thompson, Little Rock, who has served most efficiently for a number of years as dining hall supervisor, will again be in charge of the dining hall for the 1949 period of the Arkansas Baptist Assembly, July 5-13. The dining hall which was enlarged several years ago, now seats approximately 1,000 people. An entire new staff of cooks has been engaged for this year's session; meals will be better than ever. More than fifty young men and women, selected from the various churches over the state will serve as waiters and waitresses for the entire assembly period.

Important Notice

Dormitory Supervisors Wanted

The Assembly management has a few more openings for men and women to serve as dormitory supervisors. Those interested in serving in this capacity should make application now. Some of the duties of those who serve in this capacity are: See that the dormitories are kept clean and in order; care for the sick; encourage all to attend classes, and all other sessions of the Assembly; roll call, and evening prayers at the close of each day. Help each one to have a happy and profitable time at the assembly.

Dormitory Space Available

Those who have not already made reservations are urged to send in the reservation fee of \$2.00 AT ONCE. There is still space for some 150 additional persons in the dormitories. We predict a capacity attendance again this year—send your reservations now and be assured of a place to stay. Mail fees to Dr. Edgar Williamson, 212 Baptist Building, Little Rock.

Free Vacation Bible School Helps

We now have in stock the free Vacation Bible School package which contains a copy of the "What? Why? and How? of the Vacation Bible School; the 1949 Catalog of supplies; Order Blank, Standard of Excellence, and a copy of the Vacation Bible School Report Blank.

Order your free helps now and begin to make plans for a Vacation Bible School in your church. A postal card request addressed to your State Sunday School Department, will bring these free helps to you.

An abundance of book marks containing the Training Union daily Bible readings for the quarter, April, May and June, are on hand and you may secure the number that you need, free of charge, by writing to your State Training Union Director.

Figures to Inspire

Sunday, May 15, 1949

	S. S.	T. U.	Add.
Little Rock, Immanuel	1202	417	8
Including Missions	1557	639	0
Ft. Smith, First	1147	453	0
El Dorado, First	806	245	2
Hot Springs, Second	787	175	
North Little Rock, Earing Cross	785	354	15
Including Mission	884	409	
Little Rock, Second	750	159	2
Pine Bluff, First	700	42	
Benton, First			
Including Mission	651	111	
Pine Bluff, South Side	595	238	5
Including Mission	687	267	
Conway, First	548		
Camden, First	538	151	4
Including Missions	735	295	
Magnolia, Central	536	161	33
Including Missions	656		
Little Rock, Tabernacle	533	202	1
El Dorado, Second	529	170	2
Crossett, First	525	211	
Hope, First	502	102	
Including Mission	525		
Arkadelphia, First	495	191	
Russellville, First	470	153	4
Including Missions	519	169	
McGehee, First	467	174	2
Including Missions	572	229	
Hot Springs, Central	457	114	
Including Mission	532	161	
Paragould, First	438	172	8
Including Missions	620	231	
Little Rock, Pulaski Heights	435		5
Fordyce, First	433	168	
North Little Rock, First	433	108	
Including Missions	452		
Fayetteville, First	407	244	1
Including Mission	459	268	
Texarkana, Beech Street	407	124	2
West Helena	405		
Hot Springs, Park Place	398	102	
Malvern, First	396	124	3
Including Mission	423		
El Dorado, Immanuel	359	208	2
Including Mission	439	229	
Ft. Smith, Immanuel	390	117	5
Cullendale	376	220	
Ft. Smith, Grand Avenue	370	117	1
Stuttgart, First	360	189	4
Including Mission	406	199	
Searcy, First	360		1
Paris, First	452	123	
Ft. Smith, Calvary	348	75	3
Little Rock, South Highland	331	150	6
Smackover, First	323	110	
Pine Bluff, Second	317	126	2
Hot Springs, First	307	76	2
Ft. Smith, Bailey Hill	301	125	14
Dumas, First	279	78	4
Including Mission	315		
North Little Rock, Park Hill	271	86	1
El Dorado, Immanuel	395	208	2
Springdale, First	265	222	
Including Missions	370		
Siloam Springs, First	264	171	3
Ft. Smith, South Side	284	84	10
Texarkana, Calvary	257	100	
Rogers, First	256		1
Mena, First	227	96	
Harrison, First	226	160	2
Including Mission	310	141	
Hoxie, First	222	88	16
Stamps, First	219	81	
Greenwood, First	216	93	
Ft. Smith, Trinity	205	88	2
Gurdon, Beech Street	200	73	
Little Rock, Hebron	188	95	
Little Rock, Reynolds Memorial	179	70	2
Bentonville, First	178	66	
Warren, Immanuel	156	97	1
Crossett, North			
Crossett	139	51	
Kensett	135	74	3
Elliott	131	141	
Pine Bluff, Matthews Memorial	128	82	
Ft. Smith, Temple	111	48	
Hot Springs, Lake Hamilton	108	33	
Fountain Hill, First	102	65	1
Texarkana, Eastview	100	51	

NEW BOOK

The Right Way

Author: R. C. Campbell
 Publisher: Broadman Press
 Price: \$1.75

This book is most appropriately named: "The Right Way." And there is no preacher among the Southern Baptists who is better qualified to make "The Right Way" plain to all readers than Dr. R. C. Campbell.

The book is brim full of good reading; it is Christ-centered in every chapter; it shows the "way" to Christ, the "way" in Christ to eternal truth, and the "way" through Christ to abundant living.

Each of the twelve chapters is vital and dynamic with gospel truth, as you may judge from such chapter titles as, "The Man on Fire," "Turn Back to Jesus," "The Bank of the Bankrupt," "God Signs the Check," "Darkness Cannot Put It Out."

This is a good book for both preachers and laymen.

Editor.

Ft. Smith, North Side	99	25	2
El Dorado, Parkview	95	30	
Dardanelle, First	93		
Wilmar	85	50	
Brumley's Chapel, Conway	61	63	
West Point	60	55	
Grannis	60	44	
Rogers, Pleasant Hill	53	32	
Monte Ne, First	52	35	
Douglasville, Second	51	45	
N. Little Rock Peoples	42		

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W. M. U.

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Executive Secretary

Attend District Meetings

The program for the annual District meetings of Woman's Missionary Union will feature the presentation of both Foreign and Home Missions. And special emphasis will be given Stewardship through the stressing of Southern Baptists worthy aims for 1950, "Every Baptist a Tither," and "Fifty-Fifty by 1950," and through re-emphasis on certain special objects being promoted by Woman's Missionary Union.

Check the following schedule of places and dates carefully, and be sure to attend this all-day meeting in your District. Fill your cars with both women and young people and enjoy fellowship with others who are zealous about the extension of the Kingdom.

Northwest, Siloam Springs.....	June 16
West Central, Magazine.....	June 17
Southwest, Hope.....	June 21
Southeast, First, Camden.....	June 22
Central, First, N. Little Rock.....	June 23
North Central, Melbourne.....	June 24
East Central, Forrest City.....	June 28
Northeast, Osceola.....	June 29

Special Summer Workers

Two Arkansas young people have been secured to help promote summer activities. Miss Arvine Bell of Little Rock, and who is now teaching in the public school at Bauxite, will serve during June, July and August. Most of her time will be spent in promoting, directing and serving in young people's camps. Miss Bell is a graduate of Ouachita College and has had one year at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. She has been a missions enthusiast for a long time and at present is counselor of the Y. W. A. in Bauxite.

Working among the boys will be Mr. Paul Reagan, sophomore at Yale University and known to Arkansas Baptists as a "never-miss" Assembly and camp attendee. Paul's interest in missions dates to early childhood and he has not wavered from his realization that God has called him to do medical mission work. He is pursuing his preparation for that work, and Arkansas' boys will rejoice over this opportunity of fellowship with him in camps, at the assembly, and over our state as he promotes the interest of Royal Ambassadors.

These young people are here to serve YOU. Call on them for your local camps, rallies, organizational help, etc.

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Here's why: the federal government is in the electric business in some parts of the country. It sells electric service to some people and to certain industries—*below the real cost.*

Who makes up the difference? *You do*—the government uses some of your taxes for that purpose.

The more of this below-cost electricity the government sells, the more taxes the government must collect to make up the difference between selling price and cost.

We are against government-in-the-electric-business in America. Because it threatens all self-supporting electric companies. And because it is Socialization of one business, a long first step toward Socialization of *all* business.

Most Americans don't want that. . . . Do you?



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HELPING BUILD ARKANSAS

Watching and Praying in Gethsemane

By Mrs. Roland Leath

Sunday School Lesson

for May 29, 1949

Mark 14:32-42

Scholars interpret the meaning of that expression as "stunned with astonishment" or "terrified surprise." The words back of His emotions were spoken to the three companions: "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful unto death; tarry ye here, and watch."

We state that Jesus knew the reason for His coming into the world; He knew that He stood on the brink of death; He knew Judas was then doing his work and soon He would be falsely accused, arrested, insincerely tried, mocked, ridiculed, and crucified. He steadfastly had set His face toward this event all the days before this night. Why then was Jesus astonished and shocked? Perhaps, as man, He was meeting the reality of the cross for the first time.

As previously mentioned, this is so sacred and deep we hardly feel capable of exploring the depth of Jesus' experience. Great and learned men of God tell us that Jesus was not paying the penalty for our sins in Gethsemane, for that was done in the agony of the cross; that He was not struggling in this intense suffering merely because of horror in the coming physical distress; but that His agony here was in the amazing, painful shock of the coming experience of His sacrificial death when He, the sinless One, would become sin for us and would be forsaken by the Father, tasting death and hell as our substitute. That seems to be the "cup" of our Lord's deep distress of soul.

The Prayers

Going a little apart from Peter, James, and John, Jesus began three petitions to His father. In the agony of the bitter realization of drinking the cup of sacrifice, touching sin and death, separated from God, Jesus turns as a little child to "Abba, Father." In all love and trust, realizing all power is with the Father, Jesus prays that this hour might pass, that this cup be removed. Some believe Jesus prayed that this hour of stark horror and anticipation be ended, and others believe that He prayed that salvation be brought to mankind, some way without the Father's forsaking the Son even for that brief time. We will never be able to fully understand this soul agony or its true meaning, but we do understand that our Lord wanted, regardless, to obey, and He gave us the perfect example: "... not what I will, but what thou wilt."

Coming again to the disciples and finding them asleep, Jesus admonished that they remember how weak is the flesh. They, especially

Peter, had so boldly declared their intention to be loyal, and in this first test, they slept. How blind they were and how easily deceived. How much all of us who follow Christ resemble those sleepy-eyed, self-indulgent, indifferent disciples in many instances when we should be watching for our Lord.

The second time Jesus went apart and prayed and "spake the same words." Luke vividly describes the agony of Jesus as he likens the sweat which poured from His body as great drops of blood, falling to the ground. After this prayer Jesus found the disciples sleeping again. The third time He found them asleep, following the same prayer, Jesus announced: "... the hour is come; behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."

The Victory

Was the prayer of Jesus answered? He did endure all the humiliations, the death on the cross, the time when the Father left Him alone, the judgment upon Him for our sakes.

But Jesus was relieved and strengthened and won the victory the only way possible, and the way we win it in our lives—through

prayer to God, our all-wise, all-sufficient Father. The cup was not removed, but "angels appeared from Heaven, strengthening Him" (Luke 22:43). Often we are not spared an experience, but are given the strength to endure it. The vital prayer of Jesus was "Thy will be done." It was answered, for God's will was followed and the terror was gone, replaced by victory within the heart of the Son.

Jesus won His victory by absolute submission to the will of the Father. We must pray to develop as Christians and to be happy, contented and useful. Only as we pray, in faith, "Thy will be done," do we live victoriously. Our Lord suffered agony in Gethsemane for us; our Lord gave us our beautiful example in prayer. May we appreciate what it cost Him and live as He did before us.

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Concerning the Fine Art of Taking Collections

By the late Dr. J. B. Gambrell

It needs to be said at the outstart, that collections do not take themselves. In all the devices for perpetual motion, there is a dead spot on which the machine halts and never, of itself moves on. It is the same in all organizations. There must be motive power applied to overcome the inertia of human nature in a church to move it up-grade. In collection power must be according to the inertia, and it must be applied skillfully.

The Place of Giving

When we consider the large place the Scriptures assign to giving, the beautiful promises to liberal giving, the warning against withholding, we must believe collections a vastly important matter. There is no way for an individual or church to do well, religiously, if he or it withholds more than it is meet. All manner of evils follow robbing God, among them the starving of pastors. Years ago, over the river, a great outcry was made against "pressing" collections. Not a few pastors joined in the cry. Later some of them became very good farmers, but most of them became good for nothing. They ruined the churches by their pernicious teaching, and the churches applied their teaching to pastoral support, which kept these unwise preachers going from place to place trying to find a living. What they sowed they reaped. Anybody ought to know it will be that way anywhere. The Hardshells tried it and proved it on a broad scale. But there are some yet who need to learn this first principle.

Negatively, the wise pastor will never let any ice form in the church on the subject of giving. He will keep the question alive by frequent allusions to it and positive teaching concerning it. The associations used to recommend that the pastors preach a missionary sermon once a year and take a collection. That was like putting all the salt the human system would need for a whole year in one dinner. It caused a revulsion. People rebelled against "money sermons." The philosophy of teaching is "line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little." This gives the salt of sound doctrine time and a good chance to strike in. The thunderous, once a year sermon on giving is about like a starving cow to a shadow, then giving her ten bushels of meal and a wagon-load of hay at once, expecting to get a barrel of milk next morning. Nature and grace have processes, which we must regard, if we do well with either.

But note now, that in teaching concerning giving, it is quite necessary not to connect the fine grace of giving in the public mind with the very ugly habit of scolding, as the manner of some is. Keep on the bright side of it. It is a delightfully bright subject. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Once people see it and try it, they will glory in it.

It is no tooth-pulling business once we get at it right.

Concerning Church Growth

Also note particularly that no church will grow in the sweet grace of giving without practicing it. We can't grow in anything without practicing it. Collections must come on often enough to set up the habit of giving. All talk and no doing will play anything out. Paul talked about "the collection," then nailed it down by insisting that they "perform the doing of it." Pastors must hold to the actual doing of it. In many places, in all places, indeed, there will be something in the way. If we wait till all are ready, till everything is out of the way, no collections will ever be taken. Collections must have their times, and it will always be a mistake to allow "conditions and circumstances" to push them aside. Let it be said, that many times there will be those who do not love to give, and these will make adverse "circumstances and conditions . . ."

There was a church of good and intelligent members. For years, it had given around \$40 for state missions. The collection was always public, and for years it had been taken by the state secretary, who made annual rounds among the churches for the purpose of taking collections, a very sorry practice, except where pastors are wholly inefficient. The secretary fell upon another plan. He visited the churches, not to take collections, but to help the pastors prepare for the collections. The secretary asked the pastor of the aforesaid church to assemble eight or ten of his best members in a private parlor for a free talk over the mission situation. He explained matters and made them see the need for an advance. He talked it out with them in a free and easy way. They were sympathetic.

At the proper time, the secretary turned to a sister of some means and a ready mind, and asked: "How much have you been giving each year to state missions?" "Five dollars," was the reply. "For the sake of making progress could you not give twenty-five?" "Certainly, I can and I will," was her ready answer. The process was tried on a deacon with the same result. Then other amounts were agreed on by others present, all in a joyful spirit. The figures were run up to \$140. It was agreed that, when the collection was taken, by the pastor, each one present would go down for the amount named. When the collection was taken, the church gave \$220, against the usual \$40, and from that day on the church grew. New life came to it. There was a fulness of joy never before known in the church. People gathered to it, because people always honor a people who do things.

Here is the other case. I knew personally of both of them. It was a country church this time, largely dominated by a stingy, talking deacon, who adroitly killed every collection by advocating it and then leading in the giving so penuriously as to bring the whole business into contempt. This he had done many times. The pastor saw the deacon's miserable trick, and resolved to circumvent him. The year before, after very much talk, and much crying by the deacon, the church had raised \$6.50 for missions. The pastor, as pastors must sometimes do took the whole matter in his own hands. He put himself down for as much as he expected to ask even the wealthiest member to give, then he went to a liberal soul with little means and got a worthy subscription from him and then to others, according to their spirit more than according to their money. He avoided the deacon till the range of giving was fixed away up, as compared with anything the church had ever done. What the deacon said and what the pastor said is left out of this narrative, but the deacon was given to understand his trick was understood and that his leadership was ended in that church.

Every member, or nearly so, was seen. A fine contagion of enthusiasm was spread everywhere. The collection was rounded in \$81 plus. The church found itself. There was a new leadership. There was new life. There was new power and the church never went back.

Making Definite Plans

If these two methods are employed, that is, if there is an earnest pastor, and a conference of leaders, who will set the right standard of giving; and then, if there is a member-by-member canvass, having regard to the best givers to lead all down the line, there is hardly a church that will not double or quadruple its giving. Work, do you say? Yes, but work that will pay as hardly any other work in a church will pay, not in money half as much as in spirit and growth in all the graces of the gospel. When there are organizations in the church, Sunday School, with organized classes, young people's unions, women's societies, these should all be definitely enlisted for worthy offerings.

To prepare a collection is like setting an army in array for a battle. No pastor should plunge into a collection without preparation if he can help it; but he should plunge in if he must, even if he gets but little.

The last word is to get a collection right, there must be warm blood in it. The call to duty must be insistent, and always on scriptural grounds. No one will do it right unless he believes in it,—believes he honors God and helps the people by it.