



## Our Church and the Changing Emphasis

by H. P. Robinson

"Thou art a teacher come from God"  
John 3:2

"Art thou a teacher and knowest  
not these things? Jno. 3:10.

By a slight omission from the text, you will observe that the heart and meaning has not been changed. Yet a pointed and personal question of Jesus to a Master in Israel has been lifted out of its ancient context to live and throb with current effectiveness to be at home in this august assemblage of proponents of Christian Education.

Jesus Christ was in His greatest glory as a teacher when his congregation was only one individual and He, by His master-method of interrogation wrung true confessions and commitments from their hearts.

It was through uninterrupted interviews with individuals that He made the greatest indentures relative to the changing emphasis of religious thought in that day. With Nicodemus, hidden in the dark curtains of the night, he established the practicality and expediency of the New Birth. With the outcast of Sychar at high noon in the vicinity of Jacob's well, He turned the lovelight of New Testament religion on the haughty, disdainful, racial prejudice that had held sway for 500 years and in the heat of that earnest interview, it melted like mist before the morning sun.

The time of His ministry constituted the greatest transition period in religion, thought, and conduct of all human history. The common comment to His words of wisdom was "never man spake like this man."

The usual and most obvious interpretation of this statement is that His teaching was charged with such power and authority that it was in sharp contrast to anything they had ever hear. But to my mind, that is not the only reason. The thing that literally staggered the brilliant lawyers who dared to match wits with

this master Teacher was the everlasting fitness of what He said.

He came to the heart of every problem, with a marvelous discriminating knowledge of moral and spiritual values, He recognized the disintegration of ancient foundations. But instead of mourning the passing of antiquated landmarks, He rose up to establish new standards to inaugurate a better system of worship, to interpret the capitols of justice and mercy in the light of Mt. Calvary rather than in the terrible thunder of Sinai.

He not only dealt with the propounded questions of Pharisee and lawyers, but he anticipated the unasked interrogations of their hearts and His answers were so fitting, so satisfying, so utterly complete until they could only exclaim, "Never man spake like this man."

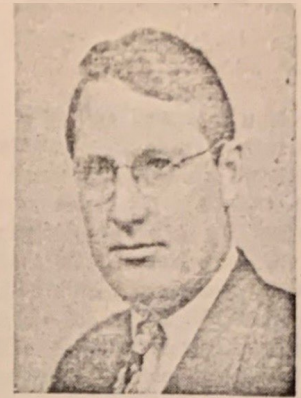
The powers of established religion nailed Jesus Christ to the Cross because they could not and would not accept His pattern of thought which changed the emphasis of religious experience and life.

We have only to scan the pages of Christian history for the past two thousand years to see who was right and who was wrong.

The only thing that can be said about the ancient powers who rejected the progressive teaching of the man of destiny is that the glory that was Israel has faded. All they have left are the tattered fragments of a rent veil and the antiquated relics of a broken law.

But the man who dared to die for the principle of his new theology has rewritten human history and has set the pattern of real progress for the past two thousand years.

Time does not follow a straight line, but always a cycle and at certain points in the cycle it is more transitory than others. For instance: you will recall the Renaissance of Europe from the 14th to the 16th centuries, the period that marked the



transition from Mediaeval to modern history.

The Mediaeval world began to stir like a sleeping giant out of the lethargy of the silent past. Architecture, art, literature, underwent a drastic change. Modern History records constant change since then. There was the industrial age the machine age, and now the age of Radar and atomic energy.

These periods of change effect every strata of human society and lay their hand upon every phase of public and private life.

As much as we like to think of the unchangeable foundations of our holy religion, we must recognize the change of application and emphasis and bow to the march of an unalterable destiny. Change is necessary to progress. Without it, society would stagnate and humanity would petrify.

I think that no period of history has been more treacherous and dangerous for the formative years of an infant church than the past 50 years. Cast in the mold of twentieth century progress, baptized in the blood and gore of two world wars, exposed to the most staggering inventions of all time and subjected to the most drastic transition of moral and spiritual values, the Pentecostal Holiness church has been hard put to it to maintain its spiritual equilibrium and to save itself from the undertow of this generation.

But in spite of the disadvantage and handicaps, the church with its auxiliary departments has made an indelible indenture upon American society and is now rising like a formidable giant to challenge the problem of a changing emphasis in moral standards and social and spiritual values.

To ignore the symptoms of a deadly

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Address delivered at North Carolina S. S. Association.  
East Rockingham had an average of 421 in Sunday school for May.

that he would show them how to live.

Ghanda told India, "turn your back on all the machinery of Western civilization, march back 200 years to the spinning wheel, the loom and the distaff and I will teach you how to live."

Many of the "old timers" look over their shoulders and say—"Go back to the horse and buggy days, to the days of small wooden churches, when persecution was strong and holiness was only a despised few and I'll show you how to live."

The supreme need of this hour is for somebody to come on the scene and see things as they are, recognize the virtues and vices of a changing system, who will say—"you don't have to go back a thousand years—you don't have to revert to a past generation—you don't have to make any provision for a vantage point. But just where you are, in a world of change, sin and ultramodern way of life if you will follow me as I follow Christ I can show you how to live."

Fifty years have passed since the latter rain Pentecost, and what a different picture. Fifty years of changing emphasis and fifty years of progress. Fifty years and the whole system has undergone a tremendous transition. Whether we admit it or not it is so. Whether it is profitable or fatal will be determined by our reaction to it. We have changed our methods, our approach and our tactics. There was a time when we specialized in rescuing the down and outs, but today we are trying to save them before they get down and out.

We once specialized in saving the drunkard, now we find it easier and more profitable to save the child before he takes a drink. We once emphasized the power of the Gospel to straighten out a crooked life, now we teach the power of the Gospel to save a life before it is twisted and marred by sin.

In a word we have changed the emphasis from cure to prevention. We are not only concerned in salvaging souls but in saving lives. We are trying to do more than just to save old men from hell, we are trying to train young lives to be happy, holy and useful in this world. **TO THIS WORTHY END WE ARE MAJORING IN SUNDAY SCHOOL.**

The Sunday school teacher whose chief objective was once just to entertain a group of restless youngsters in a crowded class room for thirty minutes, and then forget them for the next six days has now become an indispensable figure and a mighty im-

portant person in the scheme of building the kingdom of God on the earth.

Second to none in importance, the Sunday school teacher holds the highest calling on earth. For the highest form of preaching is teaching. To the teachers of Sunday school across this nation let me say, "Thou art a teacher come from God." Yours is a position and responsibility unequaled in earthly professions. With one hand on the heart strings of a child and the other on the latch string of that house of many mansions, you stand in that narrow strip that is only a step from childhood into the kingdom of God. With a group of little children before you and an open Bible on your desk, you have your fingertips on the raw materials of the eternal kingdom of our God and His Christ.

We have a high standard of requirement for church membership and that is as it should be. I fear however in some cases it is higher and more exacting than the kingdom of Christ itself. It is often much easier to get in the kingdom than in some of our churches. I am not being critical, for I think that in the main we must maintain a high standard for church membership. But through the Sunday school we can and must graduate the ascent of our people from the cradle roll to the amen corner.

The days have long since passed when we are satisfied just to convert the adult, get them in the church and begin the arduous task of teaching them Christian stewardship. We have changed the emphasis, through the mighty arm of the Sunday school. We are now training the child to pay tithes, teaching them the doctrines of our church, drilling into them the high principles and holy doctrines that have made our church great.

Thus standing between the child and the finished product of a Pentecostal Holiness church member is that all important person, **THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER.** Wherever we have been handicapped by a lack of loyalty through the years it can be traced almost invariably to a failure to train the child in Christian stewardship.

When a Catholic child is born into a Catholic home, the Catholic church enters a new name on their church roll. The same is true in some protestant groups. What we need most is an emphasis on claiming the children while they are in cradle roll for our church.

Nearer than the public school teacher, nearer than the pastor, nearer than the church and some cases near-

er than the home stands the S. S. teacher to the heart of the child. Then to those in this high and holy calling Jesus asks, "Art thou a teacher in Israel and knowest not these things?" There was a time when the S. S. was called a sleeping giant. Now, to paraphrase the words of Clarence Benson: "The Sunday school is in action." The most obvious evidence of this change of emphasis is seen in the activities of this great army of S. S. workers: pastors, teachers, officers, workers, walk the street; telephones buzz, typewriters click, newspapers carry advertisements, buses run, radio stations speak out, billboards glare at us, and the mighty emphasis has swung to its proper place for these times, **TO THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.**

By the power and influence of the efficient Sunday school we can get our hands fastened to the heart strings of the next generation and at the proper time we can lash them to the altars of the Pentecostal Holiness church.

To the loyal men and women of our church who compose that royal society of S. S. teachers and who hold that strategic position among men I have this to say—You are a teacher come from God and the cultural and spiritual pulse beat of the P. H. church in the next generation will be determined by what you do for the boys and girls who answer to the roll call in your class room every Sunday morning.

Yours is the high privilege of teaching them the beauty and necessity of the new birth, yours the privilege of moulding onto their thinking the doctrine of sanctification, Pentecost, divine healing, heaven and hell. Yours the privilege of teaching them the eternal principles of right and wrong. To magnify the Pentecostal Holiness church, to instill in them a loyalty to God and their church and above all, yours is that enviable vantage point where you can lead them into the ways of eternal life.

Yours not to drive but to lead. Yours not to condemn but to understand. Yours not to scold but to sympathize. Yours not to rule but to serve. Yours not to receive but to give. Yours not only to salvage but to save. Yours not to be forgotten but to join the immortals in the Glory, to shine as the brightness of the stars forever.

#### **AMONG THE WOMEN** (Continued from page 5.)

'He giveth His beloved sleep'—there are so many scriptures that remind us to pause, refresh our soul and

**CHANGING EMPHASIS**  
(Continued from page 7.)

disease will not lessen its destructiveness or prolong a life before its withering blast. To deny that there is a change of emphasis in preaching, thinking, and living does not change the fact and to ignore it is to suffer the irreparable loss of losing step with progress and becoming somewhat of a dangerous derelict adrift on life's sea.

Some of the good and great of every generation have done just that and have developed a negative attitude toward life—thereby losing the effectiveness of their ministry and annulling the usefulness of their lives.

The death groans of a Jewish nation that has echoed down the corridors of the ages sob with immutable pathos that testifies to us of the folly of the wrong reaction to the march of God.

John Ruskin is an example of those who develop the negative attitude toward change. He told England that if she would destroy all her railroads and coal mines and return to the simply life of the Elizabethan age

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