

Church of God  
**Evangel**



March 21, 1960

Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?



WHEN A MAN STANDS UP TO PREACH



“ . . . make full proof  
of thy ministry,” 2 Timothy 4:5.

# When a Man Stands up to Preach

By H. P. ROBINSON

Superintendent of South Carolina Conference

Pentecostal Holiness Church

{ *Sermon preached at the Church of God Ministers’  
Conference, Langley, South Carolina* }

STANDING LIKE LONE sentinels on duty, moving like servants among society is that strange, odd group of marked men known as ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ. How they came to hold that honored position and why they toil with such passionate persistence can only be answered in the immortal words that Jesus read in the Synagogue of Nazareth: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.”

The call to preach is not conditioned by heredity, environment, training, social and economic advantages or disadvantages. It is born in the heart of God. A man is selected to this timeless task in the council chambers of the eternal trinity, and the call is transmitted to the soul of the subject, not by the presbytery, the ordaining council, or by the laying on of hands, but by the mighty Holy Ghost from the throne room in the sky. Thus, the minister of the gospel, above all citizens, holds a most peculiar relationship to society.

The power, progress and potential of the church of Jesus Christ depends more than anything else on the man who stands behind the

sacred desk. The moral standards, the social behavior, and the spiritual pulse beat of society are conditioned and regulated by the man in the pulpit and his message.

The work of the minister is more multiform than any other profession on earth, and his experiences are more multifarious.

He is an administrator—he is the head of an organization.

He is a shepherd—he must tend sheep, know sheep, and feed them.

He is a priest—he must officiate in all kinds of ceremonies at the altar of worship.

He is a moral and religious leader—he must set standards and judge in matters of moral values and spiritual worth.

All of these functions of his office, though important they may be, are secondary to his one high calling.

He is a prophet of the Lord; he is a man who speaks for God. His business is to speak for another. He is a truth teller; thus he must be a truth seeker. He must dig the gold from the hidden treasure vaults of the Bible, mine it, coin it, and sell it to men. Like Moses, he must hear God’s voice, see God’s glory, talk with Him face to face and come forth to tell the people

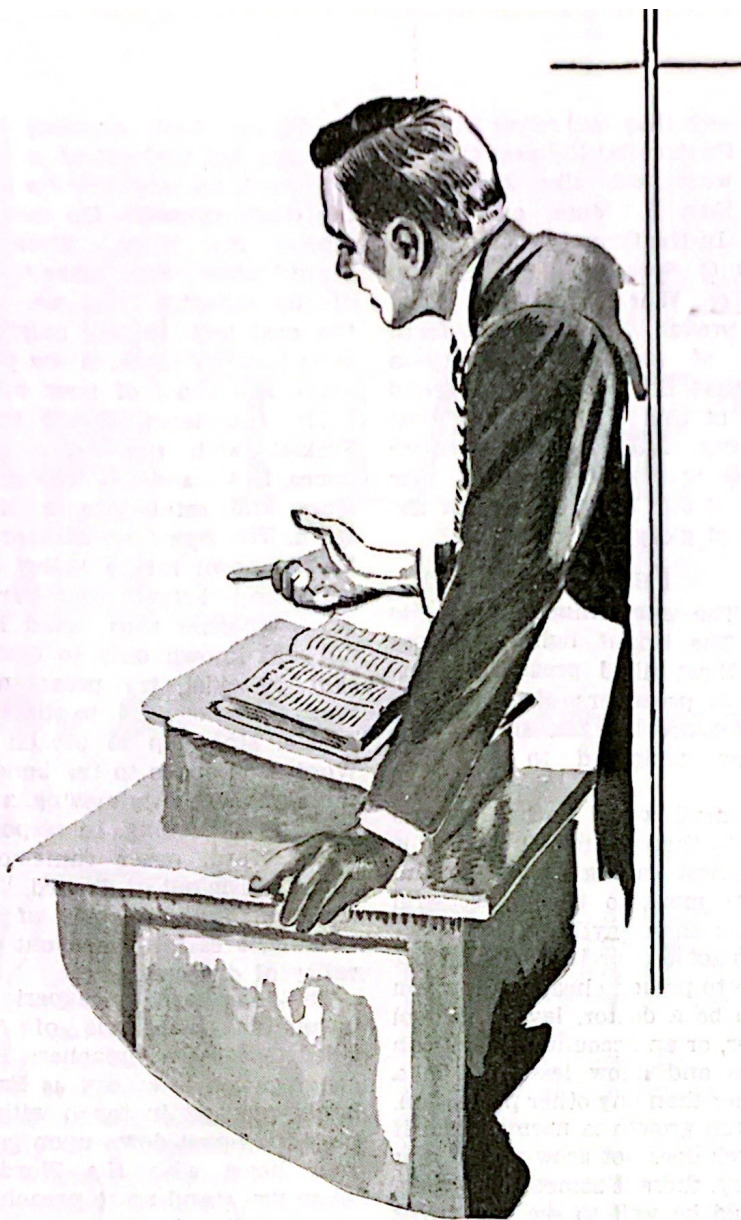
the latest revelation from heaven. “He is an ambassador from the court of heaven to the court of earth.” His one passionate appeal, first, last, and always, is for men to be reconciled to God.

In my denomination, the Pentecostal Holiness Church, I hold that precarious position as a pastor of pastors, and if I may, I would like to assume that role now to you ministers. You are constantly feeding the souls of your laymen. You are forever telling other folks what they are supposed to do: how they are to pay tithes, support the church, and treat their fellow man. There is a constant drain on your mental and spiritual resources as you pour out your soul to answer the crying need of dying men.

So often the paucity of your resources are known, not only to you, but to those to whom you minister. In such a case, you need someone to preach to you, someone to tell you a thing or two. You may have listened to yourself preach so much until you feel that you have said about all there is to say.

It is possible that some preachers feel about their preaching as the old college professor. He sat at his old, faded desk, and droned on and on in his monotonous monotone.





We nodded drowsily as we waited for the bell to ring. Suddenly he paused, raised his voice to a high pitch and exclaimed, "Young ladies and gentlemen, the sweetest music I have ever heard is the sound of my own voice falling on my ears!"

Preachers need to be preached to because there is always that possibility that Paul warned about when he said, "I keep my body under subjection lest when I have preached to others, I myself might become a castaway."

Ministers in this day are called upon to do a thousand things. Social problems, industrial problems, and domestic problems are forever being thrust upon the minister. Emphasis is being placed on administration. He is giving too much time to meeting the budget and keeping the status quo rather than mastering the art of preaching.

This is a commercial, materialistic age and the minister must have the knack of doing things. So often the minister's study is in the back-ground. It has become but an office where he works.

This trend is having a sad effect upon us. Ministers are trying to compensate for their weak messages by engaging in scores of activities in the church and community, seeking popularity with the public by joining many of the civic clubs and societies.

**OUR PREACHERS** are like Ahimaaz of Old Testament days. When Absalom was slain and Joab had sent Cushai to tell David, Ahimaaz said, "Let me run, too." Joab said, "Why do you want to run when you have no message?" He answered, "I just want to run." Joab said, "You may run." Away

he ran. He was a swift runner. When he got there, he was out of breath. David said, "Give me your message." He answered, "I have no message, oh King. I saw a tumult, but I knew not what it was." We run, but when we get there, we do not know what it is all about. We are fleet of foot, but have no message to deliver when we arrive in the pulpit.

I heard a young preacher on the radio spend fifteen minutes repeating, "I wish I had time, I would tell you something today." The truth of the matter was, he had no message. The time limit was a lame excuse.

We are trying to substitute everything imaginable for a lack in our messages. Nothing on earth will take the place of God's message. It costs so much to receive and prepare God's message; that is why men fail. It makes all the difference in the world whether you have the message or not.

Dr. R. C. Campbell says there are two kinds of preachers: one who has to find something to say, and the other who has something that must be said.

When a man stands up in the pulpit, he ought to "expound the Scriptures in tones that fall on human hearts like flakes of fire." The minister is running in every direction trying to hold his congregation—having Sunday night movies, singing conventions, healing evangelists—and exploiting every possible means to interest his people; but nothing can ever take the place of a man in the pulpit with a throbbing heart. That alone can heal the hurt of dying men.

The history of the Old Testament is punctuated with the prophets' messages. It is like a long night with bright flares flaming in the darkness whenever and wherever a man stood up to preach. An angel took a live coal of fire from off the altar and touched Isaiah's lips and for sixty years, his messages were like a "Thousand forest fires at night."

For two thousand years it has been, and it will be until Jesus comes again, that God has ordained to save the world through the foolishness of preaching.

The two bright spots in a thou-



sand years of antediluvian darkness were the preaching of Noah and Enoch.

It was night in Ahab's kingdom, but Elijah stood up to preach and light broke out. When Malachi's voice was silenced, there were four hundred years of darkness. Then, like a bugle call from the dead, a voice was heard on the banks of the Jordan—a man stood up to preach, and a flame stabbed the night.

**THE CHRISTIAN** Church began in a blaze of glory, the glory of one sermon. For three hundred years after that, the world was ablaze with the disciples and their contemporaries who, like firebrands from another world, went everywhere preaching the Word. When they ceased to preach, when the executioners' ax and the persecutors' guillotine had silenced their burning lips and stilled their eloquent tongues, there followed nine hundred years of midnight gloom.

Then a man stood up to preach, and it was daybreak everywhere. There were Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Knox, and the pulpits of the world were ablaze with fire—a fire that warmed the chilled hearts of a cold world.

There was England with her ritualism and staid orthodoxy, complacent in her self-righteousness and pharisaical piety and a man stood up to preach. John Wesley had his heart warmed; with a hot heart and a tongue aflame, he preached and the day-star arose in the East.

Following this was the American revival. When here and there, men stood up above the din and roar of materialism and greed and lifted up their voices to preach, it was like a rift in a cloudy sky when the sun would shine through for a moment. Jonathan Edwards, Dwight L. Moody, Charles G. Finney, and others stood up to preach.

All of that were but token bursts of daylight, precasting the day when the latter rain would fall and plowboys, loom fixers, coal miners, secretaries, and school teachers would be filled with the Holy Ghost, their hearts on fire and their tongues aflame, speaking in

a language they had never learned. In the Pentecostal Holiness Church, there were men like Joseph H. King, Dan T. Muse, and G. F. Taylor. In the Church of God, there were R. G. Spurling, J. B. Ellis, and F. J. Lee. When these men stood up to preach, the sun burst forth in all of its noonday glory—a glory that has lit every darkened corner of this world—a glory that will never fade until this entire universe reverberates with the shouts of our King coming on the clouds of glory.

**THIS IS OUR** day, men. The sun shines in all its glory. The bright lights of those Holy Ghost filled preachers compared to preachers of those far-off years are like the sunshine at noonday compared to a tallow candle.

The devil would rather you do anything than preach. Preaching is the highest calling on earth, and it costs more to be a successful preacher than anything else. However in some churches you can get license to preach cheaper than you can to be a doctor, lawyer, school teacher, or an accountant. You can do less and know less and be a preacher than any other profession.

Church growth is normal, and if a church does not grow under your ministry, there is something wrong. It would be well to see the Great Head of the Church, have Him diagnose the case, and ask Him to begin with you. If every young preacher had to dig a church out of the rough and build one before he were licensed to preach, we

would not have anybody in the ministry but God-called men.

There is no substitute for preaching God's message. His message is always His Word. "Preach the Word," wrote Paul, "make full proof of thy ministry." To me, that is the acid test. In the pulpit, in a most peculiar sense, is the place to make full proof of your ministry.

The experience of the mystical Ezekiel, with the valley of dry bones, is a classic. It tells a timely story and establishes a timeless truth. The Spirit of the Lord sent Ezekiel down into a valley of dry bones and "behold, they were very dry." Whether they could live or not was known only to God. God said: "Ezekiel, try preaching the Word of the Lord to them." As Ezekiel stood up to preach God's Word, God spoke to the bones and there was a mighty moving, a shaking, and a quaking. In response to God's Word, order came out of chaos, music out of discord, life out of death, and an army of living, walking, breathing men out of the valley of dry bones.

That has been the experience of uncounted thousands of Spirit-filled, God-called preachers. If your congregation is as dry as Ezekiel's bones, you get in touch with God, pray His Spirit down upon you, fill your heart with His Word, and when you stand up to preach, dead men will live, lame men will walk, old men will leap and shout, and you will go forth among your people like a strong man to run a race.

Preaching God's Word brings people together. Preaching God's Word gives life to the dead. Preaching God's Word solves peoples' problems. Preaching God's Word heals wounded spirits. Preaching God's Word sets people on fire. Preaching God's Word under the anointing of the Holy Ghost is the crying need of the preachers of this generation.

Finally, in the solemn tones of eternity, I say to you, ours is an obligation that will rest upon us throughout the ceaseless ages. God-called preachers will always be under that woe.

While there is breath in your body, remember you are in a race with time. Tomorrow, both you and your congregation will be gone.

