

THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL

*A Presbyterian weekly magazine devoted to the
statement, defense and propagation of the
Gospel, the faith which was once for
all delivered unto the saints*

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SHEARER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Mooresville, N. C., is one of a group of young mission churches in the Mt. Mourne-Mooresville section which the Rev. J. Kenton Parker is pastor. This new structure, recently completed, gives the most up to date equipment for Sunday School class rooms, worship chapel and heating plant. It represents the growth of Presbyterianism in North Carolina as a young church with a bright future of service.

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have died for Absalom. That was no hollow dedication. But he did not think of the future or of his family or his boy, when he looked with lecherous eyes on beautiful Bathsheba, another man's wife, and that man a devoted and loyal servant of his king and country. And when he plotted and accomplished Uriah's death he was thinking only of his own selfish and sordid pleasures.

David was shocked, shocked as few men have been, but he was shocked too late!

Just once more and the story is told. It's a ghastly sight! A man who was built for better things, yes, the best things, is hanging from a rope as he dangles over a cliff. His beard is black and matted. His eyes are glazed. His protruding tongue is lolling from his mouth.

As we watch his swaying body suddenly there is an ominous cracking sound, the branch breaks and his body is mangled amidst the garbage of the city below!

Judas was shocked.

See him, when his Lord is condemned, furtively entering the temple, confessing his traitorous sin to the priests with whom he had connived. From them comes only bitter cynicism. The thirty pieces of silver ring on the temple stones, and he like Saul becomes his own executer.

Never did it enter his covetous mind when he first put his hand into the bag of which he was treasurer, that that same hand would fit the noose around his own neck.

Never did he think, when he first stole the coins with which he was trusted, that one day, for 30 of them, he would betray the Lord of Glory and his best friend into murderous hands.

Shocked? How Judas was shocked! But not soon enough.

Sin's only purpose is to soil and spoil, is to doom and damn immortal souls. Never has it any other purpose. And our one chance against sin is to be shocked by it—soon enough. —S. McPh. G.

Meet For The Master's Use

The challenge to Christian service has never been greater than it is today, nor the need for the work of God's servants more pressing. In our desire to serve and in our enthusiasm to recruit others for service let us never lose sight of the fact that God can only fully use *clean instruments*.

This being the case, committal of one's life to Christ must first be preceded by three things: we must be *emptied* of sin and self in all of their many manifestations; we must be *cleansed* by the blood of

Christ; and we must be *filled* with the Spirit.

It is said that 95 percent of those who join the various bloodless cults and isms of our present time come from within the membership of the organized Church. Why do they leave? A small number possibly from some form of emotional instability, but the great majority because they have never been converted and they have not been converted because they have not heard, or have failed to respond to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

It is equally true that we often find those who are undertaking Christian work but who have themselves never had an experience of salvation from sin—a face to face transaction with the Lord Jesus Christ.

How important it therefore is that as we work and as we would recruit others for Christian service that we put things in their proper perspective and in their proper sequence.

We must be *emptied*—*cleansed*—and *filled*.

—L.N.B.

Your Bodies Are Temples Of The Holy Ghost

Another Word Against Cremation

In the six weeks since the former article commenting on cremation was written three times the matter has come into the writer's purview. A very old father left instruction for his body to be cremated, and according to reports, the only son sorrowfully carried out the instructions. A middle-aged doctor passed with such instructions, but his widow disregarded them and the writer buried the body of the deceased. A phone call came to the Shenandoah Church asking that the supply pastor officiate at a funeral. The able secretary asked what was the deceased's church connection. The reply was that the deceased had little, but some Roman Catholic attachment. Then it was added that this evidently was not strong as he wanted cremation which they did not do. The secretary replied: "Well, I don't think Dr. Robbie will officiate for that, either." He did not. Where this practice is developing, perhaps a wise pastor ought to arrange with such undertakers as do not cremate to give a funeral at a minimum charge to the needy, or else have a Church Burial Fund to help such.

After showing that the early Christians adopted the customs of the country when these did not clash with their own views, Lietzmann adds: "On the other hand, Christians unanimously repudiated cremation which was customary in the time of the early Empire in Rome." Schaff writes: "The primitive Christians always showed a tender care for the dead; under a vivid impression of the unbroken communion of saints and the future resurrection of

the body in glory. For Christianity redeems the body as well as the soul and consecrates it a temple of the Holy Spirit. Hence the Greek and Roman custom of burning the corpse (*crematio*) was repugnant to Christian feeling and the sacredness of the body."

When the pestilence raged in Carthage at the time of the persecution under Gallus, the heathen threw out their dead and sick upon the streets, ran away from them for fear of the contagion, and cursed the Christians as the supposed authors of the plague. But Cyprian assembled his congregation, and exhorted them to love their enemies. Whereupon all went to work, the rich with their money, the poor with their hands, and rested not until the dead were buried, the sick cared for, and the city saved from desolation.

Following the Jewish custom, the Christian washed the bodies of the dead, wrapped them in linen cloths, sometimes embalmed them, and then, in the presence of ministers, relatives and friends, with prayer and the singing of psalms, committed their deceased bodies as seeds of the Resurrection bodies to the bosom of the earth. Generally these burials were in sepulchral chambers with square-cornered recesses (*loculi*) in the walls as burial places. The corpses were wound in wrappings, without coffin, and the openings were closed with tiles of brick or marble. The Christian catacombs, as visible witnesses to the hope of the Resurrection, carried their weight with the Roman people. Indeed, even Julian the Apostle traced the rapid spread and power of Christianity to three causes: benevolence, care of the dead, and honesty.

The Christian custom was sustained by several texts from First and Second Corinthians. In opposing fornication, the Apostle wrote: "Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body." In opposing intermarriage with unbelievers he reminds the Christians: "What agreement hath a temple of God with idols? for ye are a temple of the living God." In warning against dividing the congregation, he says: "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroy the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, and such are ye." In the great Resurrection chapter he finds an analogy between our sowing seed and having the seed sprout into a living body and our burying the dead body and looking for its resurrection in incorruption—glory—power—a SPIRITUAL body.

Brethren, weigh these several texts, before you exchange the Christian custom of burying or entombing the bodies that are temples of the Holy Ghost for a custom which primitive Christianity universally rejected. The graves of the saints are sanctified by Christ's rest in the tomb; and the

bodies of believers being still united to Christ do rest in their graves until the Resurrection.

—W.C.R.

Do Thyself No Harm

When I see the costly and elaborate advertisements of liquor in the popular magazines and on the billboards along the highways, showing how "Men of distinction" drink, and attractive young women and well dressed young men enjoying their social drink, I sometimes wish that I had several million dollars to invest in advertisements showing the other side of drinking. Here are some of the things I would show:

I would show a young business man leaving with downcast countenance the office of the business or firm where he had been discharged because of drinking. I would show a pile-up of several cars on the highway, and the broken bodies of those who had been driving in them, dead and dying, because the driver had been drinking. I would show men in professional life losing their clients and patients because of drinking. I would show a home at the Christmas-tide without a tree or present for the children, because the father and breadwinner had dissolved his wages in drink.

I would show a hitherto innocent young woman seduced into sin and led astray because her companion had persuaded her to drink. I would show the operating room in the hospitals where men who had destroyed nature's organs through drink were under the surgeon's knife. I would show the cells of one of the central police stations filled at midnight with the maudlin drunkards. I would show the ghastly midnight haul of the police patrol wagon.

I would show the dim, silent, ice-cold chamber at the County Morgue where, each in his narrow glass-covered box, lie the unclaimed, unknown, or unwanted dead.

I would show the judge on the bench sentencing to death the prisoner who had killed when he was drunken. And over every saloon, bar, distillery, brewery and state liquor store I would post words of the Apostle: "Do thyself no harm!"

Clarence E. McCartney,
In April, 1952, Expositor.

Economic Folly— Stalin's Ally

Without using one single soldier or firing one single shot Russia is able to sit back and watch America continue on a course which will *inevitably* end in national ruin.

No individual can continue indefinitely to spend more than he or she makes without eventually going