

An Alumnus Speaks

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Andrew Preston Peabody has said: "To live in the presence of great truths and eternal laws, . . . to be led by permanent ideals. That is what keeps a man patient when the world ignores him, and calm and unspoiled when the world praises him." The writer has the above words printed in the Bible he carries in his calling, and reads them often. They have become a great source of inspiration and balance.

Since graduating from Asbury Seminary some twelve years ago I have had many occasions to attest the truth of these words. "To be led by permanent ideals" has become an obsession with me. Truly these are to be found in the "great truths and eternal laws" of a great God whose grace is sufficient to "keep a man patient when the world ignores him, and calm and unspoiled when the world praises him."

A letter came to my desk the other day from a young man serving his first pastorate since leaving Asbury Seminary. We are privileged to count him as one of our spiritual sons. In his letter he told me that already he has two young people from his work thinking in terms of full-time Christian service. His is a pastorate less than a year old. Such news intensifies my thinking of the many barren churches insofar as recruitment for Christian work is concerned, and I wonder that so many should be barren. My appeal in this writing is to challenge all who read to give attention to enlistment of "Timothys" for the preservation of truth through the flaming heart and the liberated mouth. Somehow I am impressed that pastors and churches are failing in great measure, when youth is not challenged and the call of God does not come to some to whom they minister.

When we came to our present pastorate we celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the church in the fall of our first year. In all of the twenty-five year history not one recruit had been sent out to any sort of full-time Christian work. A divided chancel arrangement in the sanctuary adapted itself more to the priestly than to the prophetic. And yet, we had a willing and coöperative people from the beginning even though we reinstated a pulpit-centered program. We believed and still do that it is by "the foolishness of preaching" that men are brought to face the challenge of what shall be done with the Christ and what shall be done with life. This old Gospel is still loaded with dynamite and can do more to jar men loose than anything else a preacher can take into his pulpit.

It was six months before we gave our first altar call, but that first night of drawing the net saw six young people kneeling in an old fashioned confession of sin. A good many tears of repentance were shed. The next Sunday evening an altar call netted fifteen more and the church began to experience a general rejoicing. Good revivals followed. Refreshing times have now become the order of the day.

Many of you who read can duplicate or go beyond what I describe. It is merely a proof that the Gospel still works and that one does not have to com-

promise with a world that too often expects compromise. On our third year in this pastorate we have already seen nine young people leave us to prepare for full-time Christian work. Three of our young men hold the local preacher's license and another is to be recommended this spring. Two more of our young people are to enroll in college next September and another makes her plans for two years hence. And yet, on every hand we hear the cry that it is so hard to get young people to think in terms of Christian work as a life calling!

The graduates of Asbury Theological Seminary are a fortunate group. They have certainties to take into the midst of a world filled with doubts and cynicism. Their preaching is centered about a Christ who has the answer for every human need and problem. They know a full gospel is the answer, taken in its application to every area of life. What we have heard and felt and seen happen expands itself to a multiplicity in the hearts of our school's Alumni. God is using and can use every graduate we send forth. They take out a message that is unhesitating and positive, positive against evil wherever it is found as well as positive in the presentation of truth. Thank God, Asburians go out "not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."

I shall ever be grateful to whomever selected that verse of scripture and had it placed under my picture in the graduating Annual. In my very first pastorate out of Seminary a young man came to me, on his way to enter Asbury College, and said, "If you had been ashamed of the gospel of Christ I would not now be on my way to study for full-time Christian service." He is now on the mission field in the Honduras area. Another of our "spiritual sons" leaves Asbury Seminary this next June to take up a pastorate. We rejoice.

For your heart to be challenged, for your mind to be stimulated, for your future to be filled with God is our heart's cry. Never has such a time of opportunity been presented for present and future Alumni. The old saints who instructed us in our day of preparation have largely given way to a new and younger group stepping in to fill the gaps. Theology with its theory continues to be brought out into the field of the practical, and a consecrated faculty stresses the fact that the world needs what Asbury Seminary has. We men on the field can give affirmation to the fact.

On one of the charges to which we were assigned we were astonished to have one of the prominent men of the church come to us after we had been preaching about a month and tell us he "surely was glad to have a pastor who preached from the Bible instead of one coming into the pulpit with his hands full of newspaper clippings." Supplement if we must, but what is better than the Word of God? Truly, every new pastorate is a new challenge to "find out where the people are and then take them to where the Lord would have them." Asbury's training, plus all the good common sense that God has given, leads a long way towards the understanding of the world's difficulties, and of the methods by which to attack those difficulties.

It has been a pleasure to greet all of you through the pages of this fine publication, and I feel, in summation, like using the words of Peter: "And besides all this, giving diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh

these things is blind and cannot see afar off." He cannot be "led by permanent ideals." Let's join together in a great Commencement in June and continue to speak a good word for Jesus Christ and for Asbury Theological Seminary "in season and out of season." Keep preaching the Word. "It is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." "Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am with you in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance" . . . of the ideals of Asbury, of the consecration of its faculty, of the prospects of its service, of the needs of its future, of the days you spent in preparation "to go out." Preach hard to the youth you face. Some of them may get a call to prepare and go out. No one has to tell you from what Seminary they should be graduated. Give them God's message and God's challenge. Shoot straight from the shoulder. "Pray without ceasing" and you will be able to "rejoice evermore." Every graduate going forth adds a link to the chain. Pray that it will encircle the globe. Blessings on you and yours, and brethren, remember to pray for us as we do for all Asburians.