

Machen's Wars: aspects of the life of J Gresham Machen

The year 2012 marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the death of J Gresham Machen, who died on January 1, 1937, at the age of 55.

Machen was born, the middle brother of three, in Baltimore, Maryland on July 28, 1881, 16 years after the American Civil War or what he would probably have known as *The war between the States* as although Maryland is a border state, his mother was from Macon, Georgia.

Through inheritances, he became wealthy as a young man. At one time and another, his grandfather on his mother's side and his own father each left him \$50,000 and this in a day when a family could live well on \$3,000 a year. His financial circumstances freed him to study in Europe and later to support Christian publications and Christian work.

But his family left him more than money. They gave him an inheritance of Southern views, social connections and solid achievement. His cultured mother wrote a book on *The Bible in Browning*. His father was a successful Baltimore lawyer and also wrote detective novels. US President Woodrow Wilson was a family friend.

The family were Presbyterians and Gresham was taught the Bible and the Westminster standards from a young age. He would later say that at twelve he had a better understanding of the Bible than many students entering seminary. In 1896 he became a communicant member of the church.

His higher academic career began locally at Johns Hopkins in 1898, where he studied for three years before doing post-graduate work in the classics department. After a brief period studying banking and international law in Chicago he enrolled at Princeton Seminary to study theology, graduating in the Spring of 1905. He then spent an important year in Germany, in Marburg and Gottingen, studying under some of the leading liberal teachers of the day. On his return to America he spent a year assisting in the New Testament department at Princeton.

He was eventually ordained as a minister in 1914, after discovering that Christ "keeps a firmer hold on us than we keep on him." He became assistant professor of New Testament at Princeton that same year and full professor in 1915. He spent 1918 and the early part of 1919 in Europe serving with the YMCA in the Great War.

Machen is best remembered for the battle he waged with others against modernism, chiefly at Princeton and then Westminster Seminary. He insisted that Modernist Christianity and Bible Christianity were two different religions. Modernism doubted the truth of Christ's resurrection and virgin birth, miracles and the Bible's accuracy, all of which Machen defended.

His most famous book appeared in 1930, his doctoral thesis on *The Virgin Birth of Christ* which answers objection after objection. He began by showing that the doctrine was very old and that differences in Matthew and Luke can be reconciled. He argues that the virgin birth was a crucial element of the whole story of Jesus: "Remove the part and the whole becomes harder not easier to accept; the New Testament account of Jesus is most convincing when it is taken as a whole."

Eventually, in 1929, Machen felt it necessary to leave Princeton and with others to found *Westminster Theological Seminary* in (founded "to carry on and perpetuate policies and traditions of Princeton Theological Seminary, as it existed prior to the reorganisation thereof in 1929, in respect to scholarship and militant defence of the Reformed Faith.") In 1933 he formed the *Independent Board for Presbyterian Missions*. He was suspended from the ministry for this, which led to the founding in June 1936 of what he called the *Presbyterian Church of America*, known today as the *Orthodox Presbyterian Church*. It was less than six months later that Machen unexpectedly died in a Roman Catholic hospital in Bismarck, North Dakota and so was with the Lord, which is far better. Here I want to concentrate on three things, 1. Machen's wars – serving hot chocolate for the YMCA, 2. Machen's wars – the battle with modernism, 3. Machen's wars – consolations in the midst of battle

1. Machen's wars – serving hot chocolate for the YMCA

America did not enter the 1914-1918 war until April 6, 1917, although events were followed closely on that side of the water.

Machen's attitude to the war can be gauged from his complaint that Princeton was a hot-bed of patriotic enthusiasm and military ardour, which made him feel like a man without a country. (see Stonehouse, 247). Like other men of God it was Machen's lot often to feel out of step with his times. It happened with regard to the war and with regard to liberalism. (Another obvious example of this was his failure to support Prohibition in the election of 1928 and took the view that this is not even the sort of question the church should advise government on - for which he was unfairly castigated as a drunk).

Machen was at odds with Woodrow Wilson's use of war for idealist aims - to make the world safe for democracy. In a letter to his mother, he declared that,

"An alleged war in the interest of democracy ... does not appeal to me This talk about British democracy arouses my ire as much as anything." After the war, he concluded that, "The war for humanity, so far as its result is concerned, looks distressingly like an old-fashioned land-grab." (Stonehouse, 244, 299).

Writing against a book promoting imperialism, he says (Stonehouse, 246)

"Imperialism, to my mind, is satanic, whether it is German or English ... I am opposed to *all imperial ambitions*, wherever they may be cherished and with whatever veneer of benevolent assimilation they may be disguised ... The author glorifies war and ridicules efforts at the production of mutual respect and confidence among equal nations [The book] makes me feel anew the need for Christianity ... what a need for the gospel!"

Writing to his mother in September 1914 about the Allies he said (Stonehouse, 244)

The alliance of Great Britain with Russia and Japan seems to me still an unholy thing – an unscrupulous effort to crush the life out of a progressive commercial rival. Gradually a coalition had to be gotten together against Germany, and the purpose of it was only too plain. An alleged war in the interest of democracy the chief result of which will be to place a splendid people at the mercy of Russia does not appeal to me.

Great Britain seems to me the least democratic of all the civilized nations of the world – with a land-system that makes great masses of the people practically serfs, and a miserable social system that is more tyrannical in the really important, emotional side of life than all the political oppression that ever was practised. And then if there is such a thing as British democracy it has no place for any rival on the face of the earth. The British attitude towards Germany's just effort at a place in ocean trade seems to me one of the great underlying causes of the war.

Shortly before America entered the war he wrote to his Congressman complaining about the draft. He was keen to make clear that he was not a pacifist but was convinced that compulsory military service brought not a danger of militarism but was militarism. He wrote (Stonehouse, 247)

"Even temporary conscription goes against the grain with me, unless it is resorted to to repel actual invasion, but my fundamental objection is directed against compulsory service in time of peace.

The country seems to be rushing into two things to which I am more strongly opposed than anything else in the world – a permanent alliance with Great Britain, which will inevitably mean a continuance of the present vassalage, and a permanent policy of compulsory military service with all the brutal interference of the state in individual and family life which that entails, and which has caused the misery of Germany and France."

"The real indictment against the modern world is that by the modern world human liberty is being destroyed. At that point I know many modern men could only with difficulty repress a smile. The word liberty has today a very archaic sound; it suggests G.A. Henty, flag waving, the boys of '76, and the like. Twentieth-century intellectuals, it is thought, have long ago outgrown all such childishness as that. So the modern historians are spelling "liberty," when they are obliged to use the ridiculous word, in quotation marks: no principle, they are telling us, was involved, for example, in the American Revolution; economic causes alone produced that struggle; and Patrick Henry was engaging in cheap melodrama when he said, "Give me liberty or give me death.""

On returning to the USA after the war Machen, like others, saw that many of the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles constituted an attack on international and interracial peace so that war would follow war "in a wearisome progression." As he had warned before the war, his own country faced,

“the miserable prospect of the continuance of the evils of war even into peace times.” As often happens with “temporary” government agencies, the war bureaucracies continued to grow and centralise.

Letters

A book has recently appeared under the P&R imprint containing letters written from Europe by Machen during the war. There had been thoughts of publishing them nearer the time but it never happened and it is only now that Dr Barry Waugh has transcribed and edited the letters for publication under the title *Letters from the front: J Gresham Machen's Correspondence from World War I*. The book is about 360 pages in length and contains an introduction and reflections with the bulk of the book being taken up with the letters, chiefly to his mother, who the bachelor loved dearly. The letters were written between January 22, 1918 and March 2, 1919. The book also contains some translations of letters written to Machen in French during the period.

When America declared war Machen was 36 and above the draft age. He wanted to aid the war effort, however. Darryl Hart (Hart, 44) points out that Machen's father had died in 1915 and that he was feeling in a rut at Princeton where students were unresponsive. Hart says that part of his motivation was to “make a difference outside academia”. He thought that as a chaplain his rank would keep him from interacting with ordinary soldiers. He considered driving ambulance but it became clear that there was an abundance of volunteers for that work, which could involve transporting munitions and so it as a YMCA worker that on January 16 of the following year Machen left America. Machen was quite cool towards the YMCA in many ways (he feared “desecration of the Sabbath in the name of Christianity and the like”) but it offered educational and literacy programmes for soldiers and sought to give moral and spiritual guidance at the front, which is where he wanted to be. Their huts in France offered hot chocolate, cigarettes and other goods to soldiers. Machen was eager to be involved in the “religious work” (Machen did not like the expression and always put it in quotation marks when he used it, 239) and did hold many Bible studies with soldiers eventually but he spent much of his time making hot chocolate and serving in other menial ways. He was “a grocery clerk and nothing else” he once quipped. At times he was quite close to the front and knew his share of bombings and other deprivations. The war ended November 11, 1918 but it was some time before Machen felt able and willing to leave Europe for home. Stephen J Nichols has commented on the impact of the war that “the loss of life and the devastation of the landscape” stunned Machen so that he could no longer be “the same academic scholar enjoying his detached academic life”. (Nichols, 40).

The letters are very personal and chatty in tone and contain little of a theological nature and sometimes nothing overtly Christian. However, they are of great interest as they not only give us a good deal of biographical background to a man who God greatly used in his time but also paint for us a picture of a Christian man seeking to serve the Lord in the midst of trying circumstances. His first biographer Ned Stonehouse calls it a “singular period” and says that “on the dark and sombre background of the war some of the facets of Machen's character light up with exceptional brilliance” (Stonehouse, 240).

A number of things come out in Waugh's collection.

1. His desire to be useful and helpful

Throughout it is clear that Machen's chief desire is to be useful in whatever way he can. He wanted to bring the gospel to the men and to help fellow believers, of course, but where that was not possible he was happy to make hot chocolate or to do whatever was needed.

Towards the end of the war he gave a large donation to the McCall Mission. He was not completely satisfied with them but thought they might use the money better than the Red Cross.

2. His desire to bring God's Word to people

His religious efforts were often frustrated. Waugh mentions that Sunday was often pay day for soldiers and that entertainments were often organised then and so “Machen's complaints about the difficulty of serving the soldiers' spiritual needs can easily be understood.”

He made his impact nevertheless. For example Waugh cites a war memoir by R W Johnson that refers to Machen when he worked in Pexonne (163). It reads

In one of the buildings in the central part of the village the Y. M. C. A. had established a canteen, and we wish to say that it was one of the best Y. M. C. A.'s we ever had with us. Our hats are off to the "Y" man of Pexonne.

On December 17, 1918 Machen wrote (239) of feeling encouraged by meetings he had been able to take speaking on *The spiritual battle*. "Perhaps my trip is going to be worthwhile" he says, betraying how frustrating it had been to that point.

3. His willingness to make do

Cornelius Van Til once commented on Machen

Machen was known for being a sharp dresser and having a consistent stylish look Well, after he died they found 20 or 30 exact copies of the same suit in his closet!

In war torn France such snappy dressing had to be forgotten. Waugh comments

In France, he spent months in a wet wool uniform, the odour of which was further enhanced by his own filthy body that had not been washed in months.

He became quite expert not only at making hot chocolate in conditions that would give health and safety experts heart failure but also became an expert at catching and killing rats.

On March 2, 1918 he writes (44)

At times I feel a longing for a land of peace and for home. I feel as though it would be a relief to the eyes to see a window pane once more, and a relief to the ears not to hear at intervals the noise of the guns and distant shells. There is one little baby in our village. In the midst of the military surroundings it is refreshing to see the little face. I wonder what its first impression of life will be in the midst of all this ruin.

Spiritually, he had to make do too – reading his English Bible rather than in Greek, which brought home some things with a freshness; worshipping with Roman Catholics. Of one sermon he says

"It was far, far better than what we got from the Protestant liberals" (319). In conversation afterwards, he could not agree with the priest on the mass but responded to a complaint that the phrase "descended into hell" was missing from versions issued to American soldiers "I could assure him that I disapproved as much as he did of the mutilation of the creed" (282).

4. His very human foibles

Machen was sometimes frustrated with his fellow workers and by contrary providences and is often disappointed in decisions made that were beyond his control. It is common for him to express his frustrations in one letter only to regret these in another and apologise for being so negative. At one point he loses his fountain pen and at another, more significantly, a suitcase of belongings. On another occasion he is disappointed to hear of a letter and a parcel sent a month before not having arrived. The letters reveal something of the real man not some public image.

5. His intellectual thirst and delight in French culture.

Several times in this period Machen was in Paris and other important French cities such as Tours and was able to take in what they had to offer by way of culture. He made great efforts to acquire the French language though he often felt frustrated by the lack of opportunity and his own slow progress. He loved going to the theatre to watching French plays and later lectures at the Sorbonne, although he regretted not having done so more when he could. At one point he says "it is tantalizing to read the Sunday bills" (270) announcing what was on at the theatre in Paris.

He also later developed quite an interest in French history and says in one place (230)

A perverse desire has come over me to steep myself in the history of the renaissance or of the grand siecle instead of preparing my Sprunt lectures.

In 1915 he had been invited to give the Sprunt lectures at Union Seminary for 1921. These formed the basis of his book *The origin of Paul's religion*.

6. His thankfulness to God

At the close of the war itself Machen wrote a long letter to his mother. He says (213)

Perhaps, one might regret not having been at Paris when the stupendous news came in. But I do not think I regret it. We heard indeed no clamour of joyful bells, no joyful shouts, no singing of the

Marseillaise. But we heard something greater by far – in contrast with the familiar roar of war – namely the silence of that misty morning. I think I can venture upon the paradox. That was a silence that could really be heard. I suppose that it was the most eloquent, the most significant in the history of the world. ... But joy should not be careless or exuberant, the dead were being brought in just as I passed ... It seemed almost impossible. On that exuberant joyful morning when the whole world was shouting, what possible place was there for death and sorrow? God knows and he alone. Meanwhile I felt more humble but not less thankful.

Towards the end he writes (218)

Meanwhile I am thankful to God for the preservation of my own life. Or rather, that does not just express what I mean, and I am not quite sure whether I can express it. I mean rather that I am thankful that God has not put upon me more than I could bear. It is obvious that other men are far braver and cooler than I am. I lose sleep when they seem to think nothing at all of the dangers that hover in the air. But out in the dressing-station, when the shells were falling close around, I somehow gained the conviction that I was in God's care and that He would not try me beyond my strength & that courage would keep pace with danger, or rather that danger (for I confess it turns out rather that way) would keep within the limits of courage! If for example a shell had hit within five feet of my head & I had been blown six or eight feet by the blast I am a little afraid that my nerves would have given way & I should not have been able to continue my service as coolly as one of my YMCA colleagues did under those circumstances. Nothing terrific like that happened to me, & I got through the trying days, though not at all with distinction, at least without distinct disgrace.

2. Machen's wars – the battle with modernism

Even as far back as 1918 there were concerns with modernism in the Presbyterian church and other Protestant churches. The 90 essays that make up the 12 volume work *The Fundamentals* (from which the word fundamentalist is said to be drawn) had been published in the period 1910-1915 as a clarion call in defence of orthodox Protestant beliefs, attacking higher criticism, liberal theology and geological evolution, among other things.

In his letter of December 28 1918 Machen says to his mother (243)

“If my conscience were quite at rest on the matter of principle, upon which Dr Stevenson and I differ so widely, I should be happy now.”

Dr J Ross Stevenson was principal of Princeton and the reference is to curriculum changes that were to put less emphasis on the biblical languages and apparently on the Calvinism in which the seminary had been steeped. The problems at Princeton can in many ways be dated from this curriculum change.

Some of what Machen had to say about Stevenson was removed from the letters but he wrongly assumed that in his YMCA role Stevenson had prevented or delayed his involvement in the religious work in France, In fact it was Dr Henry King who had him moved to Paris as some had complained that Machen's sermons were “too long and too deep”.

Waugh comments that at this time Machen was able to come to peace of mind with regard to Stevenson but “his assessment of the situation with Dr Stevenson would change over the course of the next decade”. (317).

What happened, as we have intimated, was that there was a series of battles between so called modernists and fundamentalists with the moderates between them also having quite an important impact. Machen was the focus of much of the controversy.

In 1922 Liberal Baptist Henry Emerson Fosdick, supplying First Presbyterian Church, New York preached a notorious sermon called *Shall the Fundamentalists Win?* The sermon has been cited as “the signal for a new and public outbreak of the conflict between the forces of historic Christianity and modern liberalism within the Presbyterian Church in the USA.” (Rian, *Presbyterian Conflict*, 17). Long before, before Machen had returned from France, Fosdick had published a strongly unbelieving article entitled *The Trenches and the Church at Home* in the *Atlantic Monthly* for January 1919. Attacking biblical Christianity he declared that the church had lost the soldiers because it proclaimed a negative religion of outmoded doctrines that failed to measure up to their

self-sacrifice at the front. "The only use of the church is to gather up humanity's best," he declared, to unite people in common cause of progressive social aims.

Machen probably knew of Fosdick's article when he addressed the Princeton alumni on May 6, 1919, on *The Church in the War*. He declared that the church had failed in the war because it had abandoned the reality of sin, the gospel of personal salvation and the sanctified life. He wrote, "One drop of the precious blood of Jesus is worth more, as a ground for the hope of the world, than all the rivers of blood which have flowed upon the battlefields of France". It was not merely a matter of learning more about Jesus but of believing in his divine holiness as distinct from our sinfulness. The self-satisfaction argument declared that the soldiers' sacrifice kept God happy, since the Germans were the real sinners in the war and the Allies had won a great victory by their stupendous efforts.

For Machen

The roots of modern self-satisfaction lie far deeper than the war. During the past century a profound spiritual change has been produced in the whole thought and life of the world - no less a change than the substitution of paganism for Christianity as the dominant principle of life.

He defined paganism as "a healthy and harmonious and joyous development of existing human faculties" which is the opposite of Christianity, the "religion of the broken heart". For the Christian, it is only after repentance that joy comes in being the Lord's steward in all of life.

Some time later in 1924 he wrote similarly

At this point we find the most fundamental divergence between modernism and the Christian faith; the modernist assertion that doctrine springs from life, and may be translated back into the life from which it came, really involves the relinquishment of all objective truth in the sphere of religion. If a thing is merely useful it may cease to be useful in another generation; but if it is true, it remains true to the end of time. ... It makes little difference how much or how little of Christian doctrine the modernist affirms since whatever he affirms, he affirms as a mere expression of an inner experience, and does not affirm any of it as fact.

Machen's great ability was to see liberalism not as a variant form of the gospel but as another religion altogether. This he brought out in his book *Christianity and liberalism*. The book began as an article in 1921 and was published in 1923. "The author is convinced" wrote Machen "that liberalism on the one hand and the religion of the historic church on the other are not two varieties of the same religion, but two distinct religions proceeding from altogether separate roots."

Machen's last address to the Princeton students was on fighting the good fight. He said

You will have a battle ... when you go forth as ministers into the church. The church is now in a period of deadly conflict. The redemptive religion known as Christianity is contending, in our own Presbyterian Church and in all the larger churches in the world, against a totally alien type of religion. As always, the enemy conceals his most dangerous assaults under pious phrases and half truths. The shibboleths of the adversary have sometimes a very deceptive sound. "Let us propagate Christianity," the adversary says, "but let us not always be engaged in arguing in defence of it; let us make our preaching positive, and not negative; let us avoid controversy; let us hold to a Person and not to dogma; let us sink small doctrinal differences and seek the unity of the church of Christ; let us drop doctrinal accretions and interpret Christ for ourselves; let us look for our knowledge of Christ in our hearts; let us not impose Western creeds on the Eastern mind; let us be tolerant of opposing views." Such are some of the shibboleths of that agnostic Modernism which is the deadliest enemy of the Christian religion today. They deceive some of God's people some of the time; they are heard sometimes from the lips of good Christian people, who have not the slightest inkling of what they mean. But their true meaning, to thinking men, is becoming increasingly clear. Increasingly it is becoming necessary for a man to decide whether he is going to stand or not ... If you decide to stand for Christ, you will not have an easy life in the ministry.

He also says

I do not think that we shall obtain courage by any mere lust of conflict. In some battles that means may perhaps suffice. Soldiers in bayonet practice were sometimes, and for all I know still are, taught to give a shout when they thrust their bayonets at imaginary enemies; I heard them doing it even long after the armistice in France. That serves, I suppose, to overcome the natural inhibition

of civilized man against sticking a knife into human bodies. It is thought to develop the proper spirit of conflict. Perhaps it may be necessary in some kinds of war. But it will hardly serve in this Christian conflict. In this conflict I do not think we can be good fighters simply by being resolved to fight. For this battle is a battle of love; and nothing ruins a man's service in it so much as a spirit of hate. No, if we want to learn the secret of this warfare, we shall have to look deeper; and we can hardly do better than turn again to that great fighter, the Apostle Paul. ...

And

Where are you going to stand in the great battle which now rages in the church? Are you going to curry favor with the world by standing aloof; are you going to be "conservative liberals" or "liberal conservatives" or "Christians who do not believe in controversy," or anything else so self-contradictory and absurd? Are you going to be Christians, but not Christians overmuch? Are you going to stand coldly aloof when God's people fight against ecclesiastical tyranny at home and abroad? Are you going to excuse yourselves by pointing out personal defects in those who contend for the faith today? Are you going to be disloyal to Christ in external testimony until you can make all well within your own soul? Be assured, you will never accomplish your purpose if you adopt such a program as that. Witness bravely to the truth that you already understand, and more will be given you; but make common cause with those who deny or ignore the gospel of Christ, and the enemy will forever run riot in your life.

3. Machen's wars – consolations in the midst of battle

The final thing I would like to do is to consider a short address that Machen gave to the second batch of outgoing students from Westminster Seminary in 1931. It is of interest to us here because it is headed in published form (see Hart's Selected shorter writings) *Consolations in the midst of battle*. It is interesting because the battle that Machen has in mind is not World War I and, although he clearly has in mind the battle for the truth that he and others were then involved in that was still raging at the time, what has to say has relevance to every age. It is the same theme as that which he touched on in his last address to the Princeton students. Then he said

God grant that you ... may be fighters, too! Probably you have your battles even now; you have to contend against sins gross or sins refined; you have to contend against the sin of slothfulness and inertia; ... against doubt and despair. Do not think it strange if you fall thus into divers temptations. The Christian life is a warfare after all. John Bunyan rightly set it forth under the allegory of a Holy War; and when he set it forth, in his greater book, under the figure of a pilgrimage, the pilgrimage, too, was full of battles.

Early on in the Westminster address he mentions the twin evils of opposition from the world and from a worldly church, enemies we still face today. "The world today" he says "is opposed to the faith that you profess and the visible church, too often, has made common cause with the world."

He reminds them that this has always been the case and that the Saviour warned us that it would be so. In light of this, Westminster, he says, was looking for men willing to bear the reproach of Christ and to work hard at studying God's Word.

The consolations or comforts he offers are twofold. First, and not to be underestimated, there is "the affections and prayers of the little company of men, unpopular with the world, who you have called your teachers". He reminds them that these comrades stand with far more than seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal.

He reminds them, secondly and more expansively, that his was not the first period when the Christian church was tempted to be discouraged by events. "Again and again" he says "the gospel has seemed to be forever forgotten; yet always it has burst forth with new power and the world has been set aflame." He wants them to be expectant then and meanwhile not to be unduly impressed "by the pomp and power of this unbelieving age".

He then describes how a week earlier he had looked down on the city from the 102nd floor of the then newly completed Empire State Building in New York. He states how impressed he was by it all but he says that his mind then went to other buildings he had seen before. He thought particularly of

the great cathedrals of England and the continent, living expressions of the human soul and act of worship to Almighty God.

He suggests that while modern builders may be good at lifting the body (1240 feet in record time) they do not compare with the ability of builders in former times to lift the soul. In a flight of fantasy he continues his contrast between the virtual Tower of Babel that he had more recently visited and the ancient cathedrals built over centuries designed to lift ones faith on wings to “the very presence of the infinite God”.

He is eager for his enthusiasm not to be construed as anti-modern or as a call for obscurantism and narrowness. Quite the opposite. No Machen dares to dream of a future time when God will send to the world “something far greater than genius – a humble heart finding in his worship the highest use of al knowledge and all power”. He longs for the rejection of materialism and the embrace of a true view of man.

Meanwhile it is “a drab and empty age” they are in when God's law is forgotten and men are in slavery. Hungry souls are thirsting and hungry for bread, a hunger these men could still by preaching the Word. His desire is not for a novel sect but for a company of men steeped in the Word and in the best scholarly traditions, who labour, mediate and pray in order to faithfully preach.

He wonders aloud

Perhaps you may be the humble instruments, by the use of whatever talents God has given you, of lifting preaching out of the rut into which too often it has fallen, and of making it again, by God's grace, a thing of power.

He closes by saying

Remember this, at least – the things in which the world is now interested are the things that are seen; but the things that are seen are temporal, and the things that are not seen are eternal. You, as ministers of Christ, are called to deal with the unseen things. You are stewards of the mysteries of God. You alone can lead men, by the proclamation of God's word, out of the crash and jazz and noise and rattle and smoke of this weary age into the green pastures and beside the still waters; you alone, as ministers of reconciliation, can give what the world with all its boasting and pride can never give – the infinite sweetness of the communion of the redeemed soul with the living God.