

School Life and Pastorate

by Martin Knapp

The sermon underscores the necessity of prioritizing spiritual pursuits and community service alongside academic endeavors in the life of a believer.

Scripture: Proverbs 11:30, Matthew 16:26, Mark 8:36, Luke 15:10, Acts 20:24, Romans 10:14, 1 Corinthians 9:22, 1 Thessalonians 2:8, James 5:20, 1 Peter 4:8

Topics: "Evangelism", "Soul Winning"

Description

Martin Knapp emphasizes the importance of prioritizing soul-saving over acquiring knowledge, drawing inspiration from the spirit of true Methodism and the Gospel. He shares the story of a young man, Weber, who kept salvation first in his life, leading to impactful evangelistic work even during his school days. Weber's independence of surroundings, persistence in personal work, and love for laboring among the outcasts and lowly serve as valuable lessons for young converts and students. Despite facing opposition and challenges, Weber's faith, persistence, and prevailing prayer led to numerous conversions and impactful ministry work, showcasing the power of prioritizing soul-saving.

Transcript

Gaining knowledge is a good thing, but saving souls is better. We ought to throw by all the libraries of the world rather than be guilty of the loss of one soul" (M. E. Discipline, paragraph 142). Such is the spirit of true Methodism, and of the Gospel.

Strong as was his desire for knowledge, pure as was his motive in gaining it, and strong as are the incentives in our institutions of learning that tend to impel a young man to put his studies before everything else, young Weber resisted them all, and, like a true son of Wesley, kept salvation first. He did this to such an extent that his evangelistic work might almost be said to have begun with his school life.

Students often become just as absorbed and secular in delving for knowledge as men do in delving for gold. Sometimes they enter college to study for the ministry, and postponing soul-saving work until school life is done, are graduated walking encyclopedias, as spiritually lifeless as Egyptian mummies. This comes from abuse of golden privileges.

Within three weeks from the time our knowledge seeker entered school, he was elected superintendent of a Sunday School. Soon the school burst its shell, and a larger room was sought and found. Then followed a gracious revival in St. Paul's Church, of which he was now a member, and many of the Sunday-school

pupils were happily converted.

If young converts want to know how to keep from backsliding, and students how to stay in school and at the same time grow in grace, let them study and profit by this experience. Several characteristics are worthy of especial mention.

1. His independence of surroundings. Whether in his study or in Sunday School or in the mill or elsewhere earning money to meet his school expenses, his mind was staid on God. Whether his companions were good or godless whether his superiors smiled or frowned upon him, he looked to Jesus, and was kept. Opposition seemed to intensify his determinations.

The following incident illustrating this, occurred at Minster, a Catholic town where he went to sell some buggies. They do most of their trading there on Sunday, and insisted that he should sell them buggies on that day. He explained that he was a Christian, made clear to them what a Christian is, and spoke of the sacredness of God's holy day.

The people, by this enraged, forbade his doing business there. He continued with success, which, with what he had said, turned his enemies into a mad mob. As he was leaving the place, a saloon-keeper sought a quarrel with him; but he would not come down to such unchristian conduct, and went his way, trusting Him who is able "to give power over all the power of the enemy" for protection. The saloon-keeper appealed to the already incensed mob, and they determined to kill the Christian. This with our hero was a time of most earnest prayer, for he heard their words, and perceived their intention. Then came the chase; the flying Protestant, and the pursuing Catholics. They chased him through the streets, throwing stones and bricks after him, and crying angrily, "Kill him! Kill him! Kill him!" The whole town was in an uproar. Excitement prevailed. He ran into the mayor's house for protection. The mayor proved to be a friend, and as one burly fellow rushed into the house, cursing the heretic, he was informed that he could not take the fugitive from there. After some parleying, the leader said he would protect Mr. Weber if he would go out to the crowd and make acknowledgments. This Weber refused to do, saying he had done nothing requiring an acknowledgment. As the leader promised protection, he went down to the mob, and talked to them, and finally succeeded in pacifying them. He claimed the victory through the blessing of God, to whom he poured out his soul in this trying hour. He passed through many trying scenes of a similar nature, but he came out of the active warfare whole through the mercy of God.

2. His persistence in personal work. He not only resisted the temptations offered by the unsaved, but, like Billy Bray and John Bunyan, wherever he went sought their salvation, so that his fellow-laborers learned to respect him as a Christian, and several of his fellow-students with whom he had labored, including his own room-mate, were converted.

3. He loved to labor among the outcasts and the lowly. "He took charge of the jail meetings, visiting the prison, very often distributing books there which were chiefly donated by Dr. Payne and wife. As a result several of the prisoners were converted.

"He took time from his studies to visit the poor people in the vicinity of the mission, and supplied them with clothes and fuel when necessity demanded.

"He was always ready to visit the sick and dying. When laboring there he often preached upon the streets in Cincinnati. While in school at Delaware he became a missionary to the heathen Chinese, by going to the laundry and offering to instruct them in English. His offer was accepted. He taught them English, and at the

same time taught them the Gospel. His work was successful.

"He preached for the colored people in a revival, in which many were converted. While on business in Buffalo he labored at the Canal Street Mission, where, it is said, the worst people in the world congregated."

Thus he faithfully did the humble work that he found always at hand. He that does this shall some day be "made ruler over many things."

Where others stood looking for great opportunities, he saw and gathered soul jewels that shall shine eternally in the diadem of Jesus. Ever busy, he had no time to parley with the devil.

This kind of work, both when in school and toiling for means to meet his school expenses, was his "recreation and pastime," and physically, spiritually, and intellectually, his strength increased. If students everywhere would systematically engage in such gymnastics, what blessings to themselves and others might flow thereby.

He was very liberal. "Papa," said a little girl who overheard her father say he soon should need more money, "if you want more money, you will have to begin to give more." She had learned the lesson that Jesus meant what He said when He declared, "Give, and it shall be given unto you." The truth of this Mr. Weber proved in early life. Most young men in school, particularly if devoting their lives to the ministry, would have felt that it was theirs to receive, not to give. Not so with Mr. Weber. No good cause could appeal to him in vain, and he was continually aiding the needy. In one instance he hired a man to stop drinking; in others supplied fuel and raiment to the destitute. While in Cincinnati earning money for school expenses, he organized a young people's Missionary Society, and raised quite a sum of money for that. When in canvassing he found a poor family, he frequently supplied their needs. Some one asks, "How could he give so much when he needed all to educate himself?" It was with him as with a liberal Detroit layman. When asked how he could give so much, he answered, "God shovels in, I shovel out, and He is so much stronger than I am that He continually keeps ahead of me." Whether working in the mill, canvassing on the road, or what ever he did, God prospered it; and though at times he must needs leave school to labor, those periods were short, and crowned with both spiritual and financial prosperity. Many young converts are led astray by giant Stinginess. His very breath is withering, and if his presence is cherished, like mown grass in June, so his victim will shrivel up and die. Another of the keys to his growth as a convert, and his success in whatever he undertook, was persistent and prevailing prayer. Early he realized that "prayer moves the Arm that moves the world," and wisely he availed himself of the benefits of such a mighty leverage.

He was much of the time on his knees, so much of it that "it was there that his pantaloons first wore out." He took the promises of Jesus just as they read, and meeting the conditions upon which they were offered, pleaded and expected their fulfillment, and thus prevailed with God. If he needed employment, he prayed for an opening until he felt sure of it; and soon he would find it.

On one occasion he left school to earn more money, but as for some time he had been out of practice, could earn but about twelve dollars a week, and that with the greatest effort. His constant prayer was that God would bless his labor and enable him to earn enough to carry him through college. When he was weary from excessive work he would pray for strength. He soon was able, with a slight increase of wages, to earn from twenty to twenty-eight dollars a week, nearly as much as two men would usually earn.

Satan utterly failed, where he has succeeded with so many, in persuading them that littlethings must be ruled out of the realm of prayer. "In everything" he made known his requests untoGod. His great success in canvassing he attributed to this. When others in the same work with himwere less successful, and inclined to listen to discouragement, he would tell them the secret of hissuccess. Thus he carried his religion into his business and his business into his religion. Had hehave met with a loss, which he seldom did, he would have felt as an honored Grand Rapidslayman, J. C More, president of the Grand Rapids Furniture Co., when his property was destroyedby fire. The next day was Sunday, and he was in his place at church as usual. After service hisfriends commenced to condole him on the loss of his property. They were surprised at hischeerfulness, and still more by his reply. He answered, "I have not lost anything; it's my partnerthat meets the loss." "But who is he?" "Jesus Christ. I had consecrated all to Him, and the loss isHis."

We give the following incident, written by another, as an illustration of the way BrotherWeber trusted God in little things as well as great. "During the examination a student exchangedhats with him. His hat was a new one, while the student's was an old one. As he had to beeconomical, and at the same time did not like to wear an old hat when he had expended money fora new one, he was anxious to get his own hat. He prayed over the matter. He asked God tooverrule in the return of his hat. When he prayed, he expected that his prayer would be answered.In a word, he took the Lord at His promise. When he was riding on horseback to preach for afriend, he saw a boy on the road; the Spirit seemed to say, 'That boy has your hat.' He at oncelooked up and thanked God for the answer to his prayer. He was positive the boy had his hat. A day or two after he met the boy again, when he accosted him, demanding his hat, believing inconfidence that the Spirit had directed him to this boy. The boy denied having the hat, but finallyacknowledged it, and Weber received his new hat, for which he had paid his money."

"To pray well," taught Luther, is the better part of an education. In the light of thisstatement, our coming evangelist, even in this stage of his training, was more highly advanced thanmany upon whom colleges have showered their highest honors. We may yet expect to see him"tarry in some upper chamber," pleading the "promise of the Father," until he comes out withpower such as "all his adversaries shall not be able to resist." Such were some of thecharacteristics of Weber, the college youth.

For the following additional light on his life in school we are indebted to one of hispersonal friends, Rev. C. A. Galimore.

"In the fall of 1877, Joseph H. Weber entered the Preparatory Department of the OhioWesleyan University, at Delaware, as a student.

"He immediately identified himself with the religions work of the college, and, by showinghis colors at the beginning of his student life, avoided the temptations which beset those who donot thus take an early and decisive stand for God. He was, however, far from content with mereidentification with the Christian element of the college, and soon became quite prominent onaccount of the aggressive character of his religions life. He seemed to realize that the collegepresented a fertile field for Christian work; and as one who must give an account of hisstewardship, he gave himself, with all the earnestness of his ardent nature, to the work of securingthe salvation of his class-mates. For this work he was eminently qualified, being possessed of ahigh type of moral courage, which feared not to seek out and rebuke all forms of immorality andvice; and, such was his love for souls, that he would subject himself to any inconvenience in orderthat he might lead them to Christ.

"He was possessed of a remarkably magnetic manner, which drew the students, and especially the younger portion of them, to him, as the iron is drawn to the lodestone; while his love for and interest in them seemed as intense as that of a maiden for her lover. These characteristics, together with a bright, cheerful spirit and great earnestness of manner, rendered him peculiarly adapted to the work of influencing the students for good and, it is safe to say, that, during his stay in college, no man had a greater hold upon so large a body of students, nor drew so many to Christ as he. There are many students, who are now out in the world and some who have passed into the unseen world, who will thank God through all eternity for the influence exerted by J. H. Weber on their lives.

"But, as though having a reserve of power unutilized, and needing a larger field for the exercise of it, he sought other fields wherein he might labor for the Master he so well loved. These he found in Sabbath School and Mission work. Interesting himself in what was then known as the South Delaware Mission, he was soon elected as its superintendent, and the work immediately felt the impetus of his power. The dark, contracted and dilapidated room, occupied by the Mission, was speedily exchanged for a commodious, cheery, comfortably seated apartment; while the meager attendance of twenty-five to forty soon grew to two hundred and over. This change was not consummated without great labor. Homes were visited and solicited for scholars; students and others were interested in the work, and secured as teachers and officers in the school; and means for the purchasing of supplies, and the procuring of necessities were raised.

"In this work he manifested great organizing ability, bringing order out of confusion, and laying plans for active and effective service. Very rarely was he mistaken in his judgment of anyone whom he selected for any position, as to his fitness for it. Having decided what was needed, he usually secured it. Obstacles seemed to make him but the more determined, while his faith was of that kind which 'laughs at impossibilities,' and cries, 'It shall be done.'

"He asked, and received; sought, and found; knocked, and the doors of opposition, as well as those of desire, were opened to him. There were few indeed who could resist his fervent appeals in behalf of the work that lay near his heart.

"Personal visitation was a prominent factor in the securing of his success. His Saturday afternoons were given, almost entirely, to visitation among the poor; and many a sad heart has been gladdened by the sight of his joyous face, and the sound of his heartfelt words.

"The South Delaware Mission has advanced, until it is now an independent organization, having its settled pastor. Many earnest workers have labored to contribute to this result; but among them all there has been none more earnest, none more beloved by the people, nor any whose impress on the work is more indelible than that of him who is now known as Weber, the evangelist.

"Looking out still for other avenues of usefulness, his attention was directed to the County Jail, and he entered this new path in the name of Him who came to "Proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of prison to them that are bound." Organizing a band of helpers, he instituted Sunday afternoon services, and with prayer, exhortation and sacred song, endeavored to lead the prisoners to a knowledge of the sinner's Friend. Realizing, also, that the body and mind are the handmaids of the soul, he sought to minister, in all possible and practical ways, to their physical and mental comfort and well-being. He enjoined personal cleanliness and neatness; and, by securing wholesome literature, furnished healthy food for the mind. The change in the appearance and manners of the prisoners was noticeable, in a very short time. The rough,

unkempt heads, and unshaven faces, which first greeted the visitor, soon gave evidence of care; while the oath was unheard, and the gaming card was superseded by the wholesome periodical, book, or Word of God. Who can estimate the value of the work done in softening the hearts of men incarcerated for crime, and in bringing them to the realization that the path way to virtue, integrity and manhood was still open to them, and that helping hands were not wanting to aid them in securing their lost inheritance.

"As far as the writer's knowledge serves, there was no systematic visitation at the jail until Mr. Weber inaugurated it.

"The impress left upon the college and town during his brief stay in them -- for feeling the call to a wider field -- was phenomenal, and is only exceeded by the larger, wider and more potent influence which he is exerting for God and the Church in the world at large."

His college days extended from October, 1877, until the spring of 1881. During this period he was alternately in school, or by working at his trade in Cincinnati, canvassing for a sifter, or other labor, earning money to pay his school expenses. The discipline of mind that he received in business, and in soul-saving work, and the knowledge of dealing with human nature, then garnered, more than counterbalanced what he thus lost by absence from his books; so at the close of these four years we find that he has made much progress, and is ready to remain in school or hasten now to life's great harvest-field, as God shall will. He had been licensed to preach March 3, 1879, by the quarterly conference of the St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church, Delaware, Ohio. He made good use of this privilege, and the results were favorable and encouraging. This year, as during the year before, there was a gracious revival of religion, in which he had no little part.

May 28, 1881, he went to Buffalo, and engaged in an agency to earn money to enable him again to return to his studies, if God should will.

PASTORATE

"'Tis not a cause of small import,

The pastor's care demands

But what might thrill an angel's heart,

And fill an angel's hands."

Scene, a young man on his knees earnestly pleading with God for needed guidance. Place, Buffalo. Time, September, 1881. The person was Joseph H. Weber. The time had come when he must know whether to continue school or enter at once the pastorate. In a short time he had accumulated between eight hundred and nine hundred dollars, and was, financially, able now to return and resume his studies without interruption at Delaware. There are two extreme and mistaken views in regard to preparation for the pastorate. One is that no man is fitted for it without a complete college course; the other is that if one is called to it he needs no special drill, but at once by the Holy Ghost is prepared for the service. Both of these views are unscriptural, and the truth lies between them.

Some, for the special work to which they are called, need all the preparatory discipline that they can command; others are called to a different field of work, and the discipline they will get in that work will be worth more to them than college drill. God, who is marking out the life-work of the man, knows just the

discipline he needs, and will reveal it if that revelation befaithfully sought.

He is wise, who, like Weber, appeals at such a time to Him who will not misdirect. Withhis wonted earnestness and expectancy he held this matter before the throne: Shall he again returnto college, or enter the itinerancy? This was the all-absorbing question to him. His heart's desirewas to do God's will; to obey in all respects. He believed in the special providence of God, andwould be governed by the indications of is will, taking that as final.

Worldly prosperity at one time tried to bribe him to give up the ministry. He had been"offered a situation to travel with a gentleman, who said he was making from five to six thousanddollars a year, and that, if he would travel with him, he could increase the business to ten thousanddollars." Whether the man told the truth or not, we see the principle which actuated Mr. Weber atthis time, as he refused the offer, feeling that the gain of this world would be nothing if in that gainhe should lose his own soul. He felt it to be a duty to preach, and preach he would at any sacrifice.

He had learned to study, and college honors and the positions following them doubtlessawaited him should he return to school, and he would be glad to heed the counsels of his advisorsif he could and at the same time retain the smile of Jesus.

He had committed his way to God, and he confidently awaited the answer. It came. "In a few days, after praying over the matter, a letter came from the presiding elder of Lima district,Central Ohio Conference, Rev. L. M. Albright, asking him to join the conference, about to conveneat Marion, Ohio. This was taken as the will of the Lord, and he replied that he would accept theinvitation if he could get a place that he could properly fill. The answer came that there would beno trouble about the place. He replied that he would come, and that the elder might expect at leasttwo hundred conversions the first year of his ministry. He purchased the necessary books atBuffalo, and began at once to prepare himself for the conference examination."

Conference convened Sept. 24, 1881, and having passed a satisfactory examination in thecourse of studies prescribed, he became a probationary member of the Central Ohio Conference,Bishop Merrill presiding.

The reception of the new pastor is a great event in the church which gave Mr. Weber hisappointment. By many of its members time is measured by the pastorates of the past. This eventand that event "occurred when Bro. _____ was pastor, and he was here _____ years, and then Bro. _____ came, and was pastor so long," etc., is the common way of recalling the time of events inmany Methodist families.

As to who the incoming pastor should be, the local church in other days was as ignorant asof the character of the people of the North Star, or as the coming minister himself. While that stillis true in some of the smaller appointments, yet official boards now often exert a strong influencein securing a desired appointment. In either case the people are on tip-toe of curiosity andexpectation to greet "our new minister." "Is he strong in the pulpit?" "Is he a pastor as well as apreacher?" "Will he draw?" "Is he married, or is he single?" "If single, won't _____ be just thehelpmeet for him?" "Has he a large family?" "Hope his wife is a 'tidy housekeeper,'" "and governsthe children," and "always goes with him when he calls," "and is economical," "and don't dress soplainly as to condemn us," "and will keep up with the fashions," and has "literary ability," and can"attend all the prayer meetings," and "take a class in the Sunday School," and "be president of theLadies Aid Society," and the "Woman's Foreign Missionary Society," and "resurrect the W. C. T.U.," and "visit the poor and sick," etc. "Is he a revivalist?" "Can he remove debts," and "preach

the plain truth," and "please the people," and "keep sweet," etc.

And such kindly hopes and questions, the new minister comes and receives a cordial welcome, and at once begins his work. If he be a true man of God and has the good of his people at heart, they soon learn to love him just as deeply as they did Pastor Patience who preceded him, and whose place they honestly thought "no living preacher would ever be able to fill." They expect only "that the new man will do the best he can under the circumstances." Happy people! Happy pastor!

Pastor Weber was appointed to South Lima Circuit, and reached his new field Oct. 6, 1881. He entered this work in full view of all the weighty responsibilities, which he, as a pastor, would be heir to, and "trembled like a leaf."

He realized that, though a "conference might send a man to Egypt, yet the Lord could put him on the throne," and that it is an honor to have even the least place in God's great harvest field, and so, with a faith firmly grounded on fail-less promises, with confidence he began the work that God had given him. The second day after reaching his charge, he began the work that every true pastor will not neglect, of "visiting from house to house." The people, at once convinced that their pastor was a "shepherd to feed and lead," seeking "not theirs but them," opened their hearts and gave him a cordial welcome.

Such a field as here invited his best efforts, was enough to tempt a Paul or Wesley back to earth again. Precious souls, like priceless diamonds, met his gaze on every side. Some of them saved and shining, but the great majority awaiting the hand of this consecrated jewel-gatherer for Jesus' crown. The societies met in school-houses, which soon became too small to accommodate his growing congregations.

He was privileged with leading in the building of a church edifice at an out-appointment, and at South Lima, which stand as memorials of his labors there. But infinitely more precious than houses made by hands, stand the

"Temples divine of living stones, inscribed with Jesus' name," which "immovably founded in grace" will reflect the glory of God in the new Jerusalem, world without end.

Early in the year, in answer to his prayers, and in response to his faithful labors, revival breezes began to blow, and ere the year closed a tornado of converting grace swept over the entire charge, and through St. John's, Kalida and Cherry Valley, where he was called to aid the respective pastors. A part of these revivals was a great quickening of the churches, between three and four hundred conversions, and the building of two churches and repairing of another.

This was the visible result. The homes made happy, the debauched reformed, the liberations from doubt and fear, passion and prejudice, lust and liquor, infidelity and formality, and the increasing joy and influence that shall be the outcome of this year's work in the world to come, only eternity can tell.

The following mention of events occurring in this stage of Mr. Weber's experience is from his own pen

"I was stationed at Lima, Ohio, and at this time we had no church, but were worshipping in a private house, but before winter we dedicated our church free of debt; then we began revival meetings, and God gave us very many souls. Having two other places to preach, and then I still took another, so as to be sure and have plenty to do (as I knew, if God's work did not keep me busy, the devils would). After having a sweeping revival at Lima, I began meetings at Allentown. From the first the crowds came, and for eleven nights I preached to the church. But something seemed the matter, so one night a brother from another

church invited me home with him, and theretold me the reason things did not move was, that the members did not like the way I preached andjumped about; so, loving my people, I went with the intention of being like other ministers, as theoutsiders were calling it 'a monkey show,' and every other name, and saying, 'what fun they werehaving.' I stood as straight as a straight edge and looked as solemn as a Presbyterian deacon, butGod was not to be thwarted that way. When I began to preach He paralyzed my tongue and Idropped to the floor, weeping. The brethren gathered around me and asked the cause. So I toldthem, 'I came to please you instead of God, and now I must close the meeting; I cannot offend Godand go on.'

"So, many of the brethren got up and said, 'We want this meeting to go on,' and 'Let Bro.Weber work in his own way,' and then a proposition was made, 'those that wanted the meetings togo on, and were sorry they criticized Bro. Weber, to stand up.' The whole house rose. But being sobroken up, I could not go on, and said, 'Come tomorrow night.' The next night twenty-five said, 'Iwant to be saved.' The meeting went on and such a meeting as they had not seen for years was theresult.

"After closing there, I went to this school-house for ten days. They said, 'There are onlytwo in the community that can be induced to be saved.' I said, 'that is a lie of the devil.' The peoplewanted a church there, but I said, 'Pray for a revival, and then the church will come.'

"The little class that was formed was true as the needle. The first night every memberpromised to do anything I would ask them.

"The second day, at a prayer-meeting, a young lady was very anxious to be saved, but wasafraid her ma would not like it. So that night, after preaching, I went to her ma and began to talk toher about letting her daughter come, and she became enraged and struck me with her fist, so Icalled the church and we began to pray with her, and in the midst of my prayer she slapped me onthe right cheek, so I said, 'The Bible says, "If they smite you on the right side, turn the left also," soI turned the left and she gave me another slap harder than the other. Every one in the communitybegan to pray, 'Lord, bless the woman that slapped our little preacher.' The next night after thesermon, I said, 'Let us see the salvation of God, just you pray.' I went to sixteen consecutively, andreached out my hand and they came to the altar. The next day, I made one of the brethren build analtar clear across the school-house. He said, 'What for?' But I said, 'Build it and do as I tell you.They are coming.'

"Having prayed all that day, at night I came in shouting and said, 'God is coming tonight.'So I called first one and then another of the members and stationed them among the seats and said,

"Every one of you begin to pray; and then I exhorted sinners in the aisle, and then I said,'Now, sinners, come to the altar,' and they almost fell over each other in coming. They came untilnearly forty came. Praise God!

"The tide rose higher and higher. The woman who slapped me could not stay away but onenight at a time; and one night I went to her and asked her to come. She said, 'Let me alone and Iwill come.' Soon she came and was gloriously converted, with two of her children. We raisedenough money to build a church, and now they have a flourishing society.

"Began another revival at Shawnee, and here God did manifest his power and very manywere saved. God gave us over two hundred souls on my charge. This was the greatest revival inthe conference. At Allentown we put on a new roof, belfry, and painted the church. Here were twonew churches, remodeled another, and my audiences grew so large in Lima, that, if you wanted aseat, you must needs go from a

half to an hour ahead of time to get one. They wanted me to build another church the same year. The next year they built a large church.

"I visited every family but one, and took a meal with nearly every one. I used to spend many hours in prayer. We had a revival all the year around, and one time, in an ordinary prayer meeting, we had seven saved. At times men would want to thrash me and threatened to egg me, and every threat was made, but I gave them red-hot shot all the same. My people were alive for God and souls. Went away and held three other meetings, at which over one hundred were saved.

"One time I invited the elder to preach for me. He came, and prayed such a cold prayer! Then I prayed and said to him, 'No preaching for you this evening,' and immediately invited them to the altar, and several were saved. He said, 'If you had let me preach, there might have been more saved,' but I said, 'I don't believe one would have moved.'

"All this time I felt my work was that of an evangelist. My elder said I would fail. He wanted me to remain.

"While at Sidney, at conference, I began to look for souls. Found a preacher's son, and other boys that were not saved, and began to pray for them. Visited one at his home. He was indifferent to my appeals at first, when all at once he broke down, and some of the ministers who heard me praying for him, came up, and he was saved. Went down stairs and found the Holy Ghost at work there. Found a backslider and she was saved, and while we were rejoicing, a rap was heard at the front door, and a young man, who had just graduated at the high school, stood weeping and saying 'I want to be saved.' He was saved, and is now studying for the ministry, at the O. W. U. at Delaware, Ohio. Went and stayed with a doctor's boy, and he was saved, and also another boy at conference. Began then at Republic, Ohio.

"My presiding elder said I would not succeed and would starve. I told him the other day I had not starved but had the fat of the land, and had given away about \$10,000, and that I believed 100,000 people had been blessed in one way or another in my meetings. Dr. Paine tried to get me to stay at school, and talked to me hours to get me to graduate, and said, 'If you don't listen to me you will regret it, and at some conference you will come and say, "I am sorry I did not listen to you."' I would do the same thing over, if I knew what I do now.

Thus "always abounding in the work of the Lord," he rises rapidly on the ladder of success in soul-saving work. To rescue the lost has become the passion of his life, and no wonder that he now feels that all of his energies must be bent to this one great work.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/martin-knapp/school-life-and-pastorate/>

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