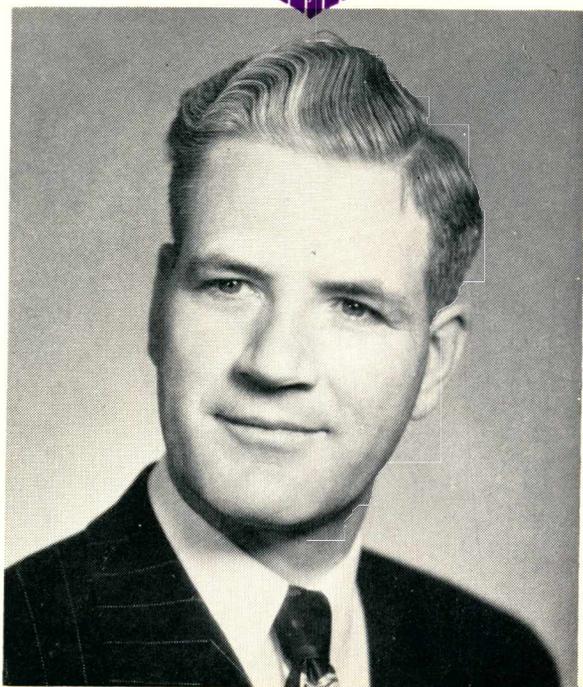


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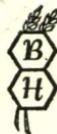


DR. ROSS E. PRICE

DYNAMIC EVANGELS

by
ROSS E. PRICE

To the Library of
my alma mater
Ross E. Price



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FOREWORD

From the dedicated heart and the expressive pen of Dr. Ross Price a timely and timeless study of the evangelistic ministry has flowed. The proclamation of the good news of the gospel has basic features which are common to all proclaimers and to all centuries. These features are both indispensable and relevant, not only to every era in which the proclamation is given, but also to every area where Christ is acclaimed as Lord of all. The essential anatomy of "the messenger, the message, the motive, and the method" of evangelism is the same for every age.

Dr. Price highlights the fact that the strategy of evangelism is related to both commitment and involvement. His snapshot biographical references to those who have been leaders in the outreach program of Christianity bring into sharp focus those elements which should characterize everyone engaged in Christian service. The way these servants of God have taken the witness stand and shared their spiritual secrets makes a vital contribution to those who desire to sharpen their tools for gathering a greater harvest of souls.

Evangelism, as the distinctive mission of militant Christianity, will be given a greater priority by those who make the truths of this book an object of genuine concern. Fuel for an upsurge of flaming evangelistic fervor will be imparted to those who follow the guidelines set forth in this study of *Dynamic Evangelism*.

MENDELL TAYLOR
Dean, Nazarene Theological Seminary

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PREFACE

The content of this book was originally presented in the form of lectures at the Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri, March 6-9, 1962, under the sponsorship of the Roy T. Williams Foundation for Lectures in Evangelism. Rev. Roy T. Williams, D.D., who for many years served as an evangelist in the Church of the Nazarene, was elected to the general superintendency in 1915 and served in that capacity until his death in 1946.

Dr. Williams was my ideal as a pulpiteer. He was a dynamic evangelist. He was a great church leader. His bearing and delivery in the pulpit were most impressive. His keen intellect, his fairness in presenting the gospel, and his passionate concern for souls were always coupled with a courtesy of manner and an utter devotion to God. God used him in a marked way as a beloved leader among us.

I was ordained by Dr. Williams on the bank of the Yellowstone River at Laurel, Montana, in June of 1933. More than once I have had the privilege of serving as the entertaining pastor for a district assembly where he was the presiding general superintendent. Today it is a joy to serve on the same faculty with his esteemed son at Pasadena College.

Although I do not consider myself an authority on evangelism, it has been my duty to teach courses in the area of the pastoral ministry and evangelism for a number of years. It was an honor to have been selected for the R. T. Williams Lectures in Evangelism at the Seminary. The enjoyment of the occasion was enhanced by

the fact that several of the faculty members have been fellow students or colleagues of mine at different times through the years.

The first lecture, which deals with "The Messenger," had previously been given at a Nevada-Utah District ministers' conclave at Las Vegas. The second lecture, dealing with "The Motive," was presented at the Southwestern Zone Conference on Evangelism held in Pasadena in October of 1963. At the request of many who urged that the lectures should be given a wider circulation we now present them in book form. No claims to originality are made. Quotations are included from many writers. Illustrations are drawn from both Scripture and church history. If they will aid some pastor or evangelist or student of evangelism in the task of winning people to Christ, their publication may not be amiss.

Thanks be to God for sending some of his evangelists to an insignificant community that even I might hear His gospel and believe.

—ROSS E. PRICE
Professor of Theology
Pasadena College

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1

The MESSENGER

Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.

But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord. Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.

—JER. 1: 4-10

Whenever God would bring the good news of His great salvation to mankind, He must first find a mouth-piece. Every messenger of God should hear the voice of the eternal God saying unto him: "I knew you before I formed you. I set you apart before you were separated

from your prenatal existence. I have ordained you a prophet unto the heathen."

For each true prophet of God, the divine idea in eternity lies back of the divine creative act in time. There must arise in him the conviction that before ever God allowed him to see the light of day He had that holy purpose in mind that here should be a messenger of eternal truth. God's ordination—the ordination of the pierced hands—must precede the ordination of the church. There must be the solemn conviction that if one should do the will of God for his life he must preach God's message.

But there must come along with this basic conviction a deep and soul-humbling sense of

I. PERSONAL UNWORTHINESS

It should always be a solemn wonder to the individual evangelist that God should have chosen him from among the many sons of men to be a mouthpiece for the great Saviour of men. He who lacks a modest opinion of himself will surely ever remain too opinionated for God to use fully and unreservedly.

Thus Jeremiah cried out: "Ah, Lord God!, behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child." Even though he was probably twenty-four years old at the time he heard God's call, he felt himself but a child.

One could wish that every novice in evangelism were filled with this same sense of inadequacy for the divine task. The human messenger and instrument must realize his own insignificance if he is to be mightily used of God in the cause of pleading with lost and rebellious humanity. Only when one has a keen sense of his own inability and unworthiness of so high and holy a calling can he ever hear God saying to him, as God said to Jeremiah, "To whomsoever and whatsoever, be not afraid; I will deliver thee." Only then can the divine

finger touch the stammering tongue; only then can the Eternal Logos leap like a tongue of fire from the human mouth with words that smite the sinner's soul and arouse those dead in trespasses and sins. Only when one recognizes that, if ever he accomplishes anything for God, the Eternal One must work in and through him can he ever become mighty to the tearing down of the strongholds of Satan and the upbuilding of the ramparts of Zion. Such has ever been the humble attitude of God's greatest leaders across the centuries.

No man with a burning passion to present Jesus Christ wastes time in self-exaltation. Paul referred to himself as "the least of the apostles"; and again, as "less than the least of all saints." St. Francis of Assisi could think of no better name for himself and his order of medieval evangelists than *Fraters Minor*, "Little Brothers." He himself was mightily impressed with a sense of his own unworthiness to proclaim Christ's message. Like St. Paul, he too felt himself to be less than the least.

John Livingston was used of God in what was perhaps the most remarkable revival of the seventeenth century. It took place in the famous Kirk of Shotts. Following a great and blessed Communion service celebrated there on Sunday, June 20, 1630, he was appointed to preach on the Monday that followed. As the morning dawned after a night of prayer and praise with a small band of friends, he was seized with a great sense of his own unworthiness, incompetence, and insufficiency. So great it was, he gave up any thought of preaching. His strength seemed to leave him and he actually thought he would die. He sought to slip away into the fields to hide, but his friends gathered around him and persuaded him to stay.

When the time came, he stood up to preach, feeling like the weakest of God's creatures. But on that memorable day of June 21, 1630, God came upon him with a mighty anointing. He preached on Ezek. 36:25-26 (a

true holiness passage if there is one in the entire Bible). He expounded the truth with a burning heart, with thoughts and words that held his listeners spellbound for an hour and a half. Then, as he sought to conclude, a second anointing swept over him, so for another hour he continued with melting heart and great liberty of utterance. He had never experienced this before nor did he afterward. Five hundred men and women, some from high society, some poor wastrels and beggars, were converted where they stood, and lived transformed lives from then on.

With all his German courage, Luther was still a man of great humility. He was indeed a poet, a preacher, a massive personality. The most fearless man of his time, he was a terror to his enemies. He had simple tastes, solid good sense, a playful sense of humor, and was transparently honest and sincere. He was approachable and humble among his friends. He was a great Christian, with an awful sense of the presence of God, a love and knowledge of the Scriptures, and a man given to much prayer.

And what shall we say of John Wesley, with his humility and great plainness of speech and simple style of writing? He declared that "a man with one foot in the grave must waste no time with ornament."

Charles G. Finney deliberately gave himself to the use of simple language that the gospel might not be misunderstood.

Canon Bryan Green, of Birmingham, lists among the three great certainties that have come to him out of his work and experience as an evangelist: the "clear conviction of his own complete unworthiness to preach the Gospel."¹ Thus he says: "The Spirit of God does not use a man to proclaim His Gospel because of what he is, but in spite of him; and the more one sees the power of God

¹*The Practice of Evangelism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), p. 210.

to change people's lives the less one feels worthy to be used to proclaim it."²

George Sweazey declares: "The keeping of the sense of the divine partnership—of humble dependence on a Greater Power—is the clearest essential for evangelism. . . . The Lord rewards only the humble. . . . When evangelism becomes merely a matter of well-polished methods, it is finished. . . . Modesty is a saving quality. . . . Evangelism is one beggar telling another where to get food."³

One should never consider himself too highly sophisticated to preach a simple, old-fashioned gospel. Let him remember that the marvelous revelation of the New Testament was, for the most part, in the simple vernacular, *Koiné* Greek of that day. And let it not be forgotten that originally the New Testament was given to us in modern speech. Likewise, evangelists must learn to speak in a tongue that is understood by the common people.

He who is unwilling to become even a fool for Christ's sake is filled with a subtle pride which prevents him from taking a risk such as this. And he who thinks more of himself and his reputation than he does of Jesus and His gospel is yet uncleansed from this sin of pride. For the true evangelist is so anxious to exalt Jesus Christ that he has little time to wonder or worry just what the folk will think of him.

Some of God's greatest evangelists have been men of limited talent, intellect, and education, but their utter dependence upon God's grace made them effective messengers. And others of God's greatest evangelists—like the Apostle Paul—have been highly educated men; but the secret of their success lay not in their learning but in their grasp of the Saviour's words: "Without me ye can do nothing."

Well might St. Francis of Assisi remind us: "Above

²*Ibid.*, pp. 210-11.

³*Effective Evangelism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1953), p. 53.

all the gifts and the graces which the Holy Spirit gives to His friends is the grace to conquer oneself, and willingly to suffer pain, outrage, disgrace, and evil treatment, for the love of Christ."

And so it must be noted that a second major consideration in the qualification of the true evangelist is

II. A PERSONAL PENTECOST

"*Tarry ye.*" We should never forget that this command of our Saviour takes priority over the command, "Go ye." As Daniel Steele has so truly declared it:

A Christian worker without the Spirit dwelling within him is a canon without an explosive, an organ without wind, an engine without steam, and a dynamo without electricity. He is a dead man preaching to dead souls. The same truth which he ineffectually utters would convict of sin and bring to Christ if they came all aglow from a soul baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire. This is not a mere theory. Barren ministries have been made abundantly fruitful by the advent of the Holy Spirit in the preacher's heart.⁴

Many are the witnesses across the years to this transformation in their ministry by the enduement of the power of the Holy Spirit. Surely if the apostles and the other mighty evangels who have followed in their train needed this cleansing baptism to enable them to speak the truth of God with power, do you think we can be effective without it today?

St. Francis of Assisi experienced two definite and mighty outpourings of the Spirit upon his soul. The first of these was his marvelous conversion in the wayside chapel of St. Damian. There he saw the vision of the eyes of Christ upon him, and there he fell in love with Jesus. The second great crisis which he experienced was in the church of St. Mary of the Angels on February 24, 1209, at

⁴*The Gospel of the Comforter* (Chicago: Christian Witness Co., 1917), p. 237.

the festival of St. Matthias. He felt himself seized and overpowered with a great emotion. The tenth chapter of Matthew now became his calling and his mission.

John Tauler had been preaching with a good measure of success at Strasburg until a pious layman, one of the "Friends of God," came to hear him. This humble layman persuaded Tauler that he needed a real experience of divine things beyond that which he then knew, something that would result in a true losing of himself in God. Tauler gave up his preaching, and in a time of retirement given to fasting and prayer he sought this "higher life." After two years he reached the rest his soul yearned for. He returned to preach in the cloister chapel. A great crowd assembled to hear him, but so moved was he in the spirit that he could only weep, not preach. He was given a second opportunity to preach, and this time he spoke under such power and anointing that men and women groaned and wept and even fainted away under the intense conviction that smote them. He spared nobody's sins, felt a great compassion for everybody's distress, and was mightily used as one of God's faithful prophets. His constant appeal was for a holier life and a more real union with God on the part of his hearers.

Years later Martin Luther was led into a deeper relationship with Christ through the reading of Tauler's writings on the "higher life."

John Wesley himself was transformed from a ministerial failure in Georgia to the great evangelist of Methodism. There was the epochal event that came to him at the Aldersgate Street meetinghouse in 1738 followed by the experience of sanctification. Of the latter fact he testifies in his letter to Bell and Owen in October of 1762 as follows: "You have over and over denied instantaneous sanctification to me; but I have known and taught it (and so has my brother, as our writings show) above these twenty years."

The twentieth-century evangelist needs a work of

grace that will remove from his heart not only the disposition for self-exaltation, but also the man fearing spirit. Such a work of grace would enable him to engage in courageous, fearless denunciation of sins, private and public, as did Savonarola, John Wycliff, and Charles G. Finney. Such would enable him to face fearlessly persecution and martyrdom, if necessary, as did men like Hugh Latimer and Lorenzo Dow.

As in the case of Isaiah, so it is with the evangelist today. There must be the "Lo" of cleansing before there can come the "Go" of commission. (Cf. Isaiah 6:7, 9). Isaiah caught a vision of the holy God, and then he caught a vision of his uncleansed lips and the unclean lips of those about him. Out of his conviction of need came the cry: "Woe is me! for I am undone." In response to that cry came the reply, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away."

Isaiah's problem was the same as that of anyone whom God calls to proclaim His message. He must first find a divine remedy for that "equivocation" (the Hebrew term suggests "inequality—an up and down" attitude of the soul) which would want to preach to please one's hearers—forgetting, of course, that God is always the biggest Listener a preacher ever has. No evangelist will be effective if he preaches messages that are contradictory. The trumpet must not give an uncertain sound. The word of God must ring true to the Revelation of God each time it is spoken.

How can the sinner ever be smitten with conviction if the preacher is "mealy mouthed" and lacks the courage to declare, "Thus saith the Lord?" Not many people will seek the Lord under the preaching that says: "You must repent, so to speak; and be converted, as they say; or you will be damned, as it were." And what consolation could any evangelist derive from preaching a message that demands that people mend their ways, and then adds the observation that unless they are among the elect

they cannot hope to be different? No soul is apt to seek repentance and forgiveness who is told:

*You can, and you can't; you shall, and you sha'n't;
You will, and you won't; you'll be damned if you do,
And you'll be damned if you don't.*⁵

But the moment Isaiah's lips were cleansed, he then received a commission that made him one of the mightiest exponents of the Divine Word that history has ever known. Now he could truly declare: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach" (Isa. 61:1). And, beloved, if Isaiah needed this experience, most certainly we do! If an H. Orton Wiley needed it (and received it in the year 1902 in Berkeley, California), then most assuredly do I need it!

What kind of an evangelist would the Apostle Peter have been had not his heart been cleansed from that "maid-fearing" spirit? How daringly he spoke following Pentecost, with great boldness of speech before even the Jewish Sanhedrin. Heaven's unction rested upon his lips while his auditors trembled before the truth he spoke.

We may be well assured that the Holy Spirit will not entrust His power and authority to one who does not surrender himself to His cleansing and guidance, for He does not grant his power separate from himself.

This brings us to the third great qualification that must be found in the evangelistic messenger if his ministry is to be more than mere empty gesture making:

III. THE ANOINTING OR HOLY UNCTION

One preaches with power only when he preaches truth under the compulsion of the Holy Spirit.

Concerning unction we may very well ask: How can anyone adequately define this "mystery of godliness"? There is no concise theological definition for it. Nor can

⁵With such words as these Chas. G. Finney and Lorenzo Dow were wont to characterize Calvinism.

it be experienced by any neatly worked out ceremonial formula. It comes only upon the God-possessed and God-anointed messenger. Daniel Steele offers us the following definition, however: It is "that contagious, indefinable state of the speaker's sensibilities combining deep conviction of the truth uttered, strong emotion, religious fervor, and melting tenderness."⁶ Thus we may think of it as the endorsement of the Holy Spirit, God himself attending our words with power, human words charged with heaven's electricity. It may be illustrated by the statue of Phillips Brooks preaching with the Christ standing behind him with His hand resting upon the preacher's shoulder.

This unction is the miraculous, divine illumination of the true evangelist. It begets discernment of revealed truth. It enables one to work in the enablement of the Holy Spirit. It brings the intuition of the Spirit as our source of understanding, as over against the tuition of study and classroom learning. It is more than mere energy of the flesh. It makes our spoken word authoritative and enlightening. We may be sure that no mere man can speak the word that breaks the heart of stone. The Holy Spirit must make the application of the truth, however well prepared it may have been by the human instrument. The gospel of grace must be preached with more than ordinary orthodox correctness and literary finish; it must come forth like a life-giving fountain under the divine anointing.

This holy unction is something of an unearthly thrill, charging the messenger from head to foot with the awful sense of the presence of God. It is the manifest presence and endorsement of the Holy Spirit as one feels the Word upon him to deliver and does so with unusual liberty and blessing. There is a sense of urgency about it, and as the messenger meditates upon the message which God has given, it burns like a fire within him.

⁶*Op. cit.*, p. 225.

Woe to that preacher who tries to counterfeit this unction by resorting to a sickly sentimentalism, mere cant, the ministerial whine, or even simulated fervor! It is like the holy oil that burned in the sevenfold lamp of the ancient Tabernacle; it must not be counterfeited. To attempt it carries dire penalties from God, such as the judgments which fell upon those who sought to offer strange fire upon God's ancient altar. It comes only by a divine formula. This dew of the Lord settles only upon the true and prophetic intercessor.

It was this that made that Scotsman by the name of Knox burn with an intense zeal for his people until he cried: "Give me Scotland or I die." And he was indeed willing to die for what he believed to be right. He was a man of much prayer, many tears, and a great humility before Almighty God. This made him intolerant of sin, and unbending before the face of evil men and wicked rulers. Hence he was a power for righteousness in the land. And right well might the Earl of Moray, then regent of Scotland, say as he stood at Knox's grave: "Here lieth a man who in his life never feared the face of man, who hath been often threatened with dagge and dagger, but yet hath ended his days in peace and honour." His word was fulfilled when as a galley slave his ship skirted the shores of his "Bonnie Scotland" and his captain bade him look, asking if he recognized those shores. "Yes," he cried, "and my tongue shall one day glorify God again there."

It is this unction that begets what may be called "the oratory of the Holy Spirit," as Daniel Steele expressed it. In days of old it made the prophet see the vision of the Almighty and become indeed God's oracle. Thus he thundered his pleadings with a rebellious Israel, underlining each paragraph with the significant refrain: "Thus saith the Eternal One."

In the days of the Early Church "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with

boldness" (Acts 4:31). And while they were yet speaking, "the Holy Ghost fell on all of them which heard the word" (Acts 10:44).

Obviously then, this unction is the person and presence of the Holy Spirit himself. Therefore he who drives the chariot of the Lord must not be frightened by the fire of this Holy Spirit. Nor can any minister keep this divine unction, this anointing of the Spirit, and at the same time deride or discount the sanctifying work of that same Spirit.

The unction of the Holy Spirit is the much-needed "new discovery" in divine resources for our atomic era. And it is just precisely when a man preaches under this divine anointing that whatsoever he looses on earth is loosed in heaven, and whatsoever he binds on earth is bound in heaven. He whom the Holy Spirit endorses is the one whom that Spirit is permitted to use unreservedly. The acts of the evangelist then become not "The Acts of the Apostles" but more correctly "the Acts of the Holy Spirit." Let the reader note that John 20:23 follows immediately after John 20:22. Before ever Christ says: "Whose soever sins ye remit [forgive], they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained," He says: "*Receive ye the Holy Ghost.*" This is the fundamental prerequisite.

We may be sure that speaking minus the unction gives us only a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. It is the unction that makes the difference between mere lectures, orations, essays, speeches and a message, a prophetic utterance, a soul-awakening sermon. Drs. Bresee and Wiley used frequently to illustrate it by the difference between real fire and mere painted fire. They would remind us that a picture of fire placed in a haystack made no difference in the hay, but something definitely happened whenever a flambeau of real fire came into contact with it. The true evangelist seeks the genuine anointing

that gives evidence of the Spirit's endorsement as he speaks.

These, then, are the three great requirements for an effective soul-winning evangelist: (1) A deep and abiding conviction of one's own personal unworthiness as the mouthpiece of God—causing one to rely utterly and continually upon the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit; (2) A genuine and personal experience of the sanctifying presence of that same Holy Spirit, purifying the motive, illuminating the insight, and strengthening the personal commitment to the point of holy boldness and daring that will not compromise the truth; (3) An abiding anointing for successful service which qualifies the man who undertakes supernatural work to achieve his assignment by means of supernatural power.

Each minister of God is called to do the work of an evangelist. And being so called, he is also called to manifest these three great qualifications for the task. Let us beware lest the truth which the Holy Spirit seeks to channel through our personalities to souls in the anguish of sins' deceptions be distorted, discolored, or detracted from.

Samuel Stevenson has expressed it in the following verses:

*A city full of churches,
Great preachers, lettered men,
Grand music, choirs and organs;
If these all fail, what then?
Good workers, eager, earnest,
Who labor hour by hour;
But where, oh, where, my brother,
Is God's almighty power?*

*Refinement, education:
They want the very best;
Their plans and schemes are perfect,
They give themselves no rest.*

*They get the best of talent,
They try their uttermost;
But what they need, my brother,
Is God the Holy Ghost.*

*You may spend time and money,
And preach from wisdom's lore,
But education only
Will keep God's people poor.
God wants not worldly wisdom,
He seeks no smiles to win;
But what is needed, brother,
Is that we deal with sin!*

*It is the Holy Spirit
That quickeneth the soul;
God will not take man-worship,
Nor bow to man's control.
No human innovation,
Nor skill, nor worldly art,
Can give a true repentance,
Or melt the sinner's heart!*

*We may have human wisdom,
Grand singing, great success;
There may be fine equipment,
But these things do not bless.
God wants a pure, clean vessel,
Anointed lips and true,
A man filled with the Spirit,
To speak His message through.*

*Great God, revive us truly,
And help us every day,
That men may all acknowledge
We live just as we pray!*

*The Lord's hand is not shortened,
He still delights to bless,
If we depart from evil
And all our sins confess.*

*Lord, come upon Thy people,
And give us eyes to see;
Oh, send us a revival!
Begin it, Lord, in me!
God send the true conviction
We so much need today,
A Holy Ghost revival
That does not fade away.⁷*

⁷Quoted by Evangelist John Thomas (the Welsh Evangelist) in his book *Living Messages over the Air* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, Ltd., n.d.), pp. 62-63.

2

The MOTIVE

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

—MATT. 9:35-38

True messages and true messengers are dependent upon proper motives. Jesus himself has set the example by the great compassion which He showed for lost humanity. We mention three items which are the components of the true evangelistic motive.

I. A PASSION FOR SOULS

There are many examples of this evangelistic motive in Holy Writ. We may think of it as a veritable passion of compassion. Jesus being moved with compassion for

the multitudes is a frequent picture in the Gospel narratives. Moved with compassion, He stretched forth His hand and touched and cleansed the leper (Mark 1:41). He had compassion on the multitudes and began to teach them many things (Mark 6:34). He had compassion upon the shepherdless masses as He saw them fleeced and abandoned (Matt. 9:36). He had compassion upon the great multitudes of sick folk (Matt. 14:14).

The term in the Greek which appears in each case is *splanchnidzomai*. It indicates "a strong emotion of intense concern and pity." Jesus, as He moved about Palestine, had opportunities for observing the condition of the people and His eyes were open to the moral and religious situation of His day. Two pictures seem to have filled His mind: that of a neglected flock of sheep and that of a harvest going to waste for the lack of reapers. Each of these casts into bold relief the "bipolarity" of the evangelistic encounter. First, there is the pitiful plight of the people, and second, there is the blameworthiness of those who should have had a concern for their evangelization. Shepherds by profession who lack the shepherd heart and husbandmen who lack an eye for the whitened harvest fields—what strange anomalies are these!

Centuries before the advent of Christ, he who has been referred to as "the most Christlike" of all the prophets, Jeremiah, cried with great heart yearnings:

The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black [mourn]; astonishment [dismay] hath taken hold on me. Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!

—JER. 8:20—9:1

Before the first Christian century had expired, that apostle who had it in his heart to preach the gospel even unto Spain declared:

I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed [anathema] from Christ for my brethren . . . my heart's desire and prayer to God . . . is that they might be saved.

—ROM. 9:1-3; 10:1

A similar concern had been manifested by Hosea, of the Northern Kingdom, who pleads: "O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto him, Take away all iniquity" (Hos. 14:1-2). God hid a gospel in the heartbreak of Hosea. His home and his message are a picture of the compassionate yearnings of God for His lost ones.

The great lawgiver, Moses himself, stands as one of the greatest examples here. Listen as he intercedes with a compassionate heart for the people: "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written" (Exod. 32:31-32). Note the shift in thought in this statement—"and if not." It signifies an emotion so great that the sentence was left unfinished. This is what we mean by a "passion of compassion."

But if these are examples of the true concern of the genuine evangelist, there are also examples of the sad and bitter cry of the lost who long for salvation. Perhaps the saddest indictment of the custodians of divine truth is voiced in the cry of the Psalmist: "No man cared for my soul" (Ps. 142:4). Yes, of course God cares, but He cannot save the world without human instruments. The Apostle Paul declares: "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (II Cor. 5:11). Would to

God each of us could realize what a "fearful thing" it is for unrepentant man "to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31)! It was William Booth's desire that in the preparation of each of his Salvation Army officers he might be suspended over hell for twenty-four hours in order to catch the vision of the peril of being a lost soul. He felt it would spur them to their task as soul winners.

Here, then, is the one great characteristic of a true evangelist. He is hungry for the salvation of souls. Never can he rest in that careless, indifferent attitude that says: Let them go to hell. This is the attitude which seems to plague modern Christendom—a sort of spiritual dry rot. The one with soul burden declares, "I am my brother's keeper." He carries uppermost in his heart that deep and sacred sense of the value of a person. Persons for whom Christ died—these are life's greatest values. Christian personalism (not the pagan type, nor humanism) is not only the key to an understanding of reality; it is also the key to a worthy motivation for evangelism. The supreme touchstone of any system is its attitude toward the individual person. Here, too, is found the superiority of Christianity over Fascism, Communism, materialism, and the rest of earth's totalitarianisms.

Most souls in this universe are lost souls. They are estranged from God. They are trying to live their lives at cross-purposes with reality. Some of them are our own classmates, fellow laborers, neighbors, acquaintances, and friends. And deep within the most hardened heart, the most abandoned life, there lives a self that cannot be killed and cannot be silenced. Its most basic hunger is for true rapport with reality.

The important fact here is that souls may be influenced by other souls. Our influence may win them to God or they may be damned through our indifference. The true evangelist is impressed by the solemnity of his responsibility at this point. He realizes that his is a "stewardship of destinies."

Oh, to catch the vision
Of a world that's lost!
Oh, that men would tarry
For the Holy Ghost!
Oh, for holy passion
In the human breast!
Bringing souls to Jesus,
There to find sweet rest.¹

There grow in the garden of life
Two flowers our souls to prove—
The passionate rose of self,
And the spotless lily of love.

We never can have them both;
One flower for each of us blows.
We choose the lily for aye,
Or forever we choose the rose.²

Norman P. Grubb tells of the time when that young British athlete C. T. Studd picked up a little tract on the street of his home city in Britain. It was entitled *An Atheist Views the Faith*. It read as follows:

Did I firmly believe, as millions say they do, that the knowledge and practice of religion in this life influences destiny in another, religion would mean everything to me. I would cast away earthly enjoyments as dross, earthly cares as follies, and earthly thoughts and feelings as vanity.

Religion would be my first waking thought, and my last image before sleep sank me into unconsciousness. I should labor in its cause alone. I would take thought for the morrow of eternity alone. I would esteem one soul gained for heaven worth a life of suffering. Earthly conse-

¹F. M. Lehman, "The Vision," from *Songs That Are Different*.

²James Buckham, quoted by John Wright Buckham, his brother, in *Personality and the Christian Ideal* (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1909), p. 62.

quences should never stay my hand, nor seal my lips. Earth, its joys and its griefs, would occupy no moment of my thoughts. I would strive to look upon Eternity alone, and on the Immortal Souls around me, soon to be everlastingly happy or everlastingly miserable. I would go forth to the world and preach to it in season and out of season, and my text would be, *what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?*³

Upon reading this little tract, C. T. Studd decided to do just that. His first place of missionary service was China, where his wife died. His second field with a new language to learn was India. And at the age of retirement he went to Africa, learned still another language, and served for the remainder of his life.

We Christians do not seem fully to realize the hunger of a soul awakened and longing for light. But it is illustrated by the Nez Percé Indians and their search for "the white man's Book on Heaven." The account of it runs as follows:

Back in 1831, in the earlier days of the West, the Nez Perce tribe sent four of its bravest from the great Northwest to St. Louis, Missouri. They made the perilous journey over the Rockies and across the plains and eventually appeared on the streets of that city asking: "Where is the white man's Book on Heaven?" They were taken in by a kind-hearted man of the city, but their request for the Bible was not taken seriously. Instead they were taken about the city to see its fine buildings, the parks, its zoo, and other places of interest. And on the eve of their departure a feast was given in their honor. At the feast one of them in his broken English made the following dramatic appeal for the yet unfound Bible.

"I came to you over the trail of many moons from the land of the setting sun. You were friends of my fathers, who have all gone the long road. I came with an eye partly open for my people, who sit in darkness. I go back with both eyes shut. How can I go back blind to my people? I made my way to you with strong arms through many

³Norman P. Grubb, *C. T. Studd, Cricketer and Pioneer* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1933), p. 36.

enemies and strange lands that I might carry back much to them. I go with both arms broken, and though you have given us gifts, the Book is not among them.

"My people sent me to get the white man's Book on Heaven. You took me to where you allow your women to dance, as we do not ours; and the Book was not there! You took me to where you worship the Great Spirit with candles, and the Book was not there! You showed me images of the Great Spirit and pictures of the good land beyond, but the Book was not among them.

"I go back the long trail for many moons to my people. My moccasins will be worn and my clothing torn before I reach our land. You make my feet heavy with gifts, and yet the Book is not among them. When after one more snow I arrive again to my people in the big council, our chieftain will ask me but one question: 'Did you bring the white man's Book on Heaven?'

"When my poor blind people learn that I did not bring the Book, no word will be spoken, either by our old men or our young braves. One by one they will rise from the circle and go out to their tepees in silence.

"My people will die in darkness and take the long path to the other hunting grounds. No white man will go with them, and no white man's Book to make the trails they must travel plain. I have no more words. Tomorrow at dawning I shall leave for the land beyond the mountains."⁴

Of course the Indian could not read, and if he could, there was no translation in his language. Yet his heart hunger was as great as others who seek the light, for the soul devoid of saving grace has neither rest nor peace.

In every true prophet of God there is something volcanic. There is nothing effeminate about him. There is rather a consecrated audacity. He is a man that the world cannot bully and cannot buy. Out of a burning heart he manifests a great zeal for the task. John Wesley arose at four o'clock daily for prayer and preparation for his day. Of him Burns has written:

⁴Story told by a *Nez Percé* evangelist. Cf. also M. M. Summers, *Burden for Souls*, (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, n.d.), pp. 17-18.

Ever with indomitable courage, with earnestness never varying; he toiled, consumed by the thought of the shortness of time, of the great work to be done, of the need of haste in doing it.

Up and down the land, never resting, moved this wonderful figure, bearing ten thousand cares and responsibilities, opening chapels, examining preachers, founding societies, administering discipline, conducting services, writing commentaries, building schools, founding orphanages, and keeping up a vast correspondence.⁵

Traveling with him one time was Adam Clarke, the great Methodist commentator, Wesley's junior. Arriving at a certain town in England, though they found a place in the livery stable for their horses, no one was willing to entertain or give lodging to the Methodist preachers. Wesley remembered a kindly Irish woman and requested the use of the attic of her house. She showed them to it. It had no furniture. "Where is the chair?" asked Clarke. "There is none," replied Wesley. "And where is the bed?" "There is none," came the reply. Wesley told his companion to use his saddlebags for a pillow and to stretch out on the floor for some much-needed rest. Sometime after midnight Wesley heard Clarke move restlessly and awaken. "What's the trouble, Adam?" he asked. "Can't you sleep?" "No," came the reply, "it seems as if the skin of one side of me were worn away." Wesley answered, "Thank God that you have yet another side. Turn over and get some sleep. We have five preaching appointments tomorrow, and the first of them comes at five in the morning."

Wesley preached over seven hundred times each year. His total for his lifetime is forty-two thousand sermons. He rode horseback no less than forty-five hundred miles annually. The total for his life is two hundred twenty-five thousand miles in the saddle. He had a hand

⁵James Burns, *Revivals, Their Laws and Leaders* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909), p. 331.

in the writing, editing, or publishing of about four hundred books. The little desk atop the pommel of his saddle was in constant use. A study on horseback! His first vacation was taken at the age of eighty when he spent a few weeks in Holland.

A similar zeal burned in the soul of Savonarola of Florence, Italy. Students of his life will recall that the pope opposed him and sought in several ways to silence him. Finally the pope offered him a cardinal's red hat. But Savonarola replied, "I will have no hat but that of a martyr, red in my own blood." And, as Burns observes:

Never before; perhaps, never since; have there been heard eloquence so sustained, earnestness so intense, passion for righteousness so concentrated, as were heard in those days, when, from the pulpit in the Duomo, Savonarola ruled Florence in the name of his Master, Jesus Christ. . . . He died amid the execrations of those he tried to save.⁶

This burning heart of the evangelist manifests itself in a yearning solicitude for the lost. It cannot be pretended, imitated, or simulated. It must be genuine. The true evangelist yearns for the salvation of the lost even as God yearns for them. He loves the souls of men even as Christ loved them. He is not afraid to weep over sinners.

Such a holy compassion was one of the most marked characteristics of the preaching ministry of Dr. George W. Truett, the great Southern Baptist leader. It was written about Whitefield:

*He loved the world that hated him; the tear
That dropped upon his Bible was sincere.
Assailed by scandal, and the tongue of strife,
His only answer was a blameless life.*⁷

⁶Ibid., p. 141.

⁷John Vaughan, *Life Stories of Remarkable Preachers* (London: James B. Knapp, 1892), p. 45.

Of the quaint and eccentric John Berridge, M.A., vicar of Everton, his biographer has written:

Such was his love for souls that he frequently rode on horseback a hundred miles a week, preaching ten or twelve times. And this he did for more than twenty years. In his own church on Sundays he preached at 7 and 10:30 a.m. and again at 2 and 6 p.m., to crowded congregations. In fact so eager were the people to hear him that the windows, pulpit steps, and even the crossbeams of the roof were utilized as sitting or standing places. It was not unusual for people at a distance to leave their homes at midnight and travel twenty or thirty miles to hear him at seven o'clock in the morning.

So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed, that in a single year more than one thousand persons came to him, or wrote to him, enquiring what they must do to be saved.⁸

In a letter to a friend he says, "I fear my weekly circuits would not suit a London or Bath divine, nor any tender evangelist that is environed with prunella. Long rides and miry roads in sharp weather! Cold houses to sit in, with very moderate fuel, and three or four children roaring or romping about you! Coarse food and meager drink; lumpy beds to lie on and too short for the feet, and stiff blankets, like boards, for a covering! Rise at five in the morning to preach; at seven breakfast and tea that smells very sickly; at eight mount a horse, with boots never cleaned, and then ride home praising God for all mercies!"⁹

And what about Bishop Asbury, that prophet of the long trail, who rode many a day in the rain, swam many a swollen bridgeless river, and slept many a night in the wilderness without covers? Throughout fifty years of incessant toil for the souls of men he hunted out new frontier settlements and brought them the gospel that burned like a fire in his soul.

The second great component of this evangelistic motivation is:

⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 57-58.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 61.

II. THE PROMOTION OF THE REIGN OF GOD IN THE SOULS OF MEN

Much evangelism is weak because it fails to emphasize the lordship of Jesus Christ. The true evangelist seeks to establish the throne of God in every sinner's heart. To do so he must first pull down the idols and false gods which reign there. Thus he seeks to take the citadel of man's soul by a holy assault that will tumble the forces of evil and enthrone Jesus as Lord. Man, who was born with his back toward God, must be arrested and converted; "turned around," mind you. As Faris Whitesell has written: "Unsaved people rarely look for a way to accept God's call, but rather a way to escape it. Men are running away from God rather than to Him. We must shut up the ways of escape and hedge these sinners in to the straight and narrow way which leads to life eternal."¹⁰

The true purpose of evangelism is to persuade men to surrender the throne room of the soul to the rulership of God. Until this happens no man—however religious he may be—can be said to have been evangelized. He must pass from not being a disciple into being "a man in Christ." This is what we mean by conversion. This is the central motive for evangelism. Man without God is lost! Men who will not make God their Ruler will make some earthly ruler their god. Where men reject the Christ, they soon are found calling for Barabbas. Man is made for loyalty. His soul cannot long be satisfied without some supreme loyalty. But wherever men fail to find God as their Ruler they are easily taken over by some frantic false messiah—some screaming Adolph Shickelgruber.

Thus the evangelist is determined to bring about that divine-human encounter where the claims of God on the soul of man are recognized. Even some scientists are now

¹⁰Faris D. Whitesell, *Sixty-five Ways to Give Evangelistic Invitations* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1945), p. 45.

telling us that what this distressed and divided world needs is not "more men of science," but more men of God. The clarion call of the God-called evangelist from every vantage point is: "Be ye reconciled to God." He sings with the sacred poet:

*I am a stranger here,
Within a foreign land,
My home is far away
Upon a golden strand.
Ambassador to be
For realms beyond the sea,
I'm here on business for my King.*

*This is the message that I bring,
A message angels fain would sing:
Oh, be ye reconciled,
Thus saith my Lord and King,
Oh, be ye reconciled to God!¹¹*

Christ's true ambassador is resolved that his hearers shall either yield to their Lord or be without excuse. He knows that he must either get them to open their hearts' doors to Christ, or He will leave them with those very doors more firmly barred than before. It is a life-and-death matter, and he can give the ungodly no rest in their sins. He must precipitate that crisis wherein a decision is inevitable. With a holy zeal he persecutes the careless into a true anxiety about destiny. As Spurgeon says: "Soul winning is a pursuit which grows upon a man; the more he is rewarded with conversions, the more eager he becomes to see greater numbers born unto God."¹²

God, through His evangelists, takes the initiative and forces the issue. God did not wait for Adam in that terri-

¹¹Song—"The King's Business," words by Dr. E. T. Cassel. Hope Publishing Co., owner.

¹²Chas. H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to His Students*, ed. D. O. Fuller (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1945), p. 334.

ble day of man's first disobedience. He came seeking that sorry soul: "Where art thou?" (Gen. 3:9) It is not the will of God "that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Pet. 3:9). The Divine Shepherd left the sheltered fold and went into the stormy night seeking that one lost sheep. So every true evangelist, like God, is a seeker after men. He cannot wait for the lost to find their way to him; he must go to them! Thus Bishop Asbury must advise his young preacher, saying: "Billy, my son, never miss an appointment. Ride all day in any storm, or all night, if necessary; ford creeks, swim rivers, run the risk of breaking your neck, or getting drowned, but never miss an appointment, and never be behind time."¹³

It is said of Gideon Ousley, that one-eyed preacher of Ireland, that in a day when nearly all the ministers of his neighborhood were drunken, worthless men, "he scoured the country telling the people of two things—their disease and its cure."¹⁴

Take the initiative we must! For unless Christian evangelists can match the hard-driving evangelism of modern materialism, Communism, and paganism, we shall soon be heathenized ourselves. Even as we write this there are no less than seventy-two heathen temples along the West Coast between San Diego and Seattle.

Every truly Christian evangelist is anxious for the glorification of Jesus Christ in the Church. The greatest peril to Christianity lies not in the strength of her adversaries, but in the weakness of her friends. Daniel, the prophet, envisaged a day when "the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits" (Dan. 11:32). Jesus promised that we should receive power by receiving the Holy Spirit. His disciples thought that a restoration of Israel's world-rulership would turn the trick. The

¹³Vaughan, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 159.

task which their Master had assigned was impossible on the basis of their own little resources. Jesus' answer to them was a promise that they should become effective unto earth's remotest corners when once they had received a baptism with that true "martyr Spirit." Theirs was not a problem of politics, but of power; not of world domain, but of wonderful dynamic. Let us beware of serving God by mere profession and not in power.

So the evangelist is moved to plead for the supremacy of the Holy Spirit in the life and program of the Church. As Bryan Green declares: "We cannot have apostolic Christianity without both Calvary and Pentecost; justification and sanctification; personal religion and corporate fellowship."¹⁵

"It seemed good to the Holy Ghost" was the basis on which the New Testament Church rendered its greatest decisions. If Christ is to be glorified in His Church, that Church must be a holy Church. Only then can its witness be effective, its prayers shake impossible situations, and its message win the victory over false doctrine, persecution, demonic opposition, the vested interests of a back-slidden ecclesiasticism, and sheer paganism.

Jesus' promise concerning the Holy Spirit is: "He shall glorify me" (John 16:14). It is the Holy Spirit who convinces the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment to come. An unsanctified Church will achieve little as a redeeming instrument in human society. John Wesley found that evangelism prospered as Christian perfection was preached and insisted upon. He wrote to Mr. Merryweather in 1766 as follows:

Where Christian perfection is not strongly and explicitly preached, there is seldom any remarkable blessing from God; and, consequently little to the society, and little life in the members of it. Therefore, if Jacob Rowell is grown faint, and says but little about it, do you supply his

¹⁵*The Practice of Evangelism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), p. 24.

lack of service. Speak, and spare not. Let not regard for any man induce you to betray the truth of God. Till you press the believers to expect full salvation *now*, you must not look for any revival.¹⁶

Again, Wesley writes:

I preached at Tiverton; and on Thursday went on to Launceston. Here I found the plain reason why the work of God had gained no ground in this circuit all year. The preachers had given up the Methodist testimony. Either they did not speak of perfection at all (the peculiar doctrine committed to our trust), or they spoke of it only in general terms, without urging the believers to "go on to perfection," and to expect it every moment. And wherever this is not earnestly done, the work of God does not prosper.¹⁷

Another entry in his *Journal* says:

Monday, and the two following days, I examined the society at Bristol, and was surprised to find fifty members fewer than I left in it last October. One reason is, Christian Perfection has been little insisted on; and wherever this is not done, be the preachers ever so eloquent, there is little increase, either in the number or the grace of the hearers.¹⁸

The evangelist cannot be satisfied with the conversion of sinners only; he knows Christ can be glorified only by a holy Church, and therefore seeks earnestly the sanctification of all believers. His heart longs to see the full work of God in the hearts of all his hearers.

Nor can he limit his preaching on this grace to Monday and Saturday nights and hope to be effective, any more than did Wesley's ministers when they spoke of it in generalities. Unless believers are cleansed from the exaltation of self in place of the Holy Spirit, it becomes a sad fact that Christ is actually wounded in the house of His friends (cf. Zech. 13:6).

¹⁶*Works*, VI, 761.

¹⁷*Journal*, Aug. 14, 1776.

¹⁸Oct. 30, 1765.

The third component of the evangelistic motive is:

III. THE PROCLAMATION OF A MESSAGE OF GOOD NEWS

The evangelist yearns to tell the world of the greatest event of all history. This is not the splitting of the atom, the miracle of nuclear fission, nor the launching of men into orbit around the earth, but the simple fact that God loved man enough to send His Son to rescue us from eternal destruction. The great apostolic *kerygma* of the first Christian century is still the message of salvation to this twentieth-century world. Here we are invited to see God in action in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, reconciling lost humanity to himself. In the person of Christ, God accomplishes our great deliverance from the enslavement to self, sin, Satan, and the fear of death. That lonely sufferer atop that center cross on that skull-shaped hill outside the city wall is God coming into our night of darkness to seek His long-lost creation—man. God has done for us what we could not do for ourselves. Oh, the wonder of it all! God's light has shined in our darkness, and the darkness can never put it out.

It was good news to me when, as a lad in Montana, men like F. B. Janzen, L. G. Nees, Roy Swim, and Fred St. Clair told me that Jesus loved me enough to die for me.

*Oh, the love that drew salvation's plan!
Oh, the grace that brought it down to man!
Oh, the mighty gulf that God did span,
At Calvary!*

*Mercy there was great, and grace was free;
Pardon there was multiplied to me.
There my burdened soul found liberty,
At Calvary!¹⁹*

¹⁹Song: "At Calvary," by Wm. R. Newell.

*I could not fathom God's majesty,
Nor understand all the mystery,
Of life, and death, and eternity.
It was His love that won my heart.*

*Oh, my stony heart was broken,
And it made the teardrops start.
From the Cross, God's Son has spoken;
It was His love that won my heart.²⁰*

Never forget it, you who would bear this message
under the call of God!

*Sin is just as black as in the days of yore;
Hearts are just as broken as they were before;
Calv'ry's cross is still the hope of all mankind,
And up-to-date religion is the old-time kind.*

*Up-to-date religion is the old-time kind,
That which makes anew the heart and gives us peace
of mind.*

*Every soul that comes to Jesus soon will find
That up-to-date religion is the old-time kind.²¹*

The Spirit-filled evangelist fears the terrible consequences of withholding such good news. If a man has salvation, he must share it if he would keep it. To fail to witness means that we soon have nothing to tell. Right well did those four lepers outside the walls of Samaria know the peril of withholding the news of the deserted tents of the Syrians from their famine-stricken capital city. "They said one to another, We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon

²⁰Song: "His Love Won My Heart," by Haldor Lillenas. © 1929 and 1957 by Lillenas Publishing Co.

²¹Song: "Up-to-date Religion," by Haldor Lillenas. © 1925 and 1953 by Lillenas Publishing Co.

us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell . . .” (II Kings 7:9).

A dumb Christian is soon no Christian at all. The curse of Christ is upon every fig tree that puts forth only a leafy profession with no figs growing from its branches. E. Stanley Jones defines a Christian as “one who makes others Christian.” “I am debtor” is the point of spiritual honor not only for Paul the Apostle but also for every evangelist. Dr. P. F. Bresee stated it as well as anyone: “We are debtors to every man to give him the gospel in the same measure as we have received it.”

Dr. Vanderstok, a medical doctor who came from Holland to Ruidoso, New Mexico, administered first aid to a fractured arm of one of the young men from our New Mexico Nazarene Youth Camp. When he had finished setting the broken bone he turned to the camp director, Rev. Hugh Russell, and asked him about the Church of the Nazarene. He inquired about its doctrines, its faith, and its message. When the interview came to its close the doctor turned to my minister friend and asked: “How is it that you have never come to my native Holland with that message?” And just how will any group of professing Christians answer earth’s millions at this point on the judgment day? We must evangelize or die! That is the punishment that will overtake us.

It would seem that any man could talk about that which really interests him. He who has found Christ can say so. He who loves Christ will want to talk about Him. The call that rings from every ransomed soul is identical with that of the Psalmist: “Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul” (Ps. 66:16). And as A. B. Sebrin has stated it in song: “You will want to tell it, when you get it right.”

Here, then, is the composite of motivation for evangelism: (1) A passion of compassion that yearns for the salvation of lost men; (2) a burning heart full of zeal to make God the Sovereign over every soul, and Christ the

One altogether lovely in His Church; and (3) A wonderful story to tell to every tribe and nation.

The heart of the true evangelist aches to save others: "The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" (Amos 3:8) "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

THE PREACHER

*Lo! by the Merrimac Whitefield stands
In the temple that never was made by hands,
Curtains of azure, and crystal wall,
And dome of the sunshine over all!
A homeless pilgrim, with dubious name
Blown about on the winds of fame;
Now as an angel of blessing classed,
And now as a mad enthusiast.*

*Called in his youth to sound and gauge
The moral lapse of his race and age,
And, sharp as truth, the contrast draw
Of human frailty and perfect law;
Possessed by the one dread thought that lent
Its goad to his fiery temperament,
Up and down the world he went
A John the Baptist crying, "Repent!"*

—J. G. WHITTIER²²

²²From Whittier's longer poem by this title. *The Poetic Works of John Greenleaf Whittier* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1887), pp. 184-85.

3

The MESSAGE

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will no tendure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned into fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

—II TIM. 4:1-5

God's messengers have been effective, first, because they were men of God; second, because they were anointed by the Spirit of God; and third, because they spoke an unequivocal and life-giving message from God.

God's evangelists are not only bearers of "good news" but "stewards of a message." The divine messenger must not only be able to communicate; he must have something to communicate. Ours is more than a stewardship of words; it is a stewardship of THE WORD.

That which God spelled out to all mankind in the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ, His Son, our Saviour—that is the gospel. That constitutes the “Good News” which the evangelist makes his “Great Evangel.”

As Ilion T. Jones declares:

At a special time and place in history through a special person, Jesus Christ, God on his own initiative acted to reveal Himself to men. The story of how God broke through into the stream of human history, unveiled His mind and character, unfolded His purpose and plans, proffered His love, offered His forgiveness, and promised His continuing presence and power until His children fulfil their divine destiny—this story is the Gospel of Christ.¹

The true messenger of God declares to every guilty sinner: “I have good news for you. God is not bent on your destruction. It is not the will of God that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Christ died for your sins. God loved you and sent His Son to deliver you in a great salvation. Thus the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost. I tell you this, not that your ears may tingle, but that your heart may rejoice. It is a word of joy to you whom sin has given a false hope. So let yours be the hearing of faith. Give heed to the gospel! Christ has conquered sin and death. He has risen for your justification and has given us of His Holy Spirit. He seeks to bring cheer to your desolate days by the manifestation of His glorious presence in your life. Surrender to Him today! Accept the mastery of His Spirit today and you will know not only the joy of sins forgiven, but the peace of reconciliation. Not only the life of an overcomer can be yours, but also the inheritance among all who are sanctified through Jesus’ blood. Behold! I bring you good tidings of great joy, available to all mankind. Repent ye, therefore, and believe the gospel!”

¹Ilion T. Jones, *Principles and Practice of Preaching* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), pp. 15-16.

In our Scripture passage the apostle puts his spiritual son Timothy under solemn charge before God and Christ, in the light of the coming judgment and soon return of the Saviour, to herald the Word of God, to be untiring in his urgent insistence that men attend to his message, to refute their sophisms, to rebuke their wickedness, to exhort them to accept that which is good, in a spirit of patient and continual inculcation of the truth. All this in the light of the fact that in these times men rebel against doctrinal preaching and seek rather messengers who will make their ears tingle—ears that have turned from the truth to trifles. This must be done in a wide-awake manner that shuns none of those hardships or afflictions which attend the true evangelizer, in order that his ministry may not be sold short.

Let us note, then, some of the outstanding characteristics of the message of every sincere evangelist:

I. SCRIPTURAL AND EXPOSITORY

We must never overlook the importance of the Scriptures in evangelism. Men who have been successful evangelists have recognized this. It is said of Savonarola, "He rediscovered the Bible." John Wycliffe gave the Bible to the common man. The Lollards, as his preachers were called, were loyal to the Scripture, quoting it frequently and abundantly. Martin Luther made the Scriptures his final court of appeal. He was engaged constantly in biblical studies and exegetical lectures. Calvin, Zwingli, and Knox, all gave serious expositions of Scripture. John Wesley was "a man of one Book," even though he had a hand in editing and publishing over four hundred volumes during his lifetime, and wrote on many subjects. He mastered the Greek New Testament. It is said that he knew the Greek better than he knew the English, and often quoted the Greek in order to aid his recall of the

English by way of translation. John Chrysostom achieved success in evangelism by his timely and fearless application of the Scriptures to the hearts and lives of his hearers. Fisher says of him: "As an expositor of scripture, he was thoughtful, and at the same time practical, bringing the truth of the Bible home to the heart and conscience, and in contact with the lives of men, Chrysostom had few, if any, superiors."² In our times Billy Graham is constantly repeating the phrase, "The Bible says."

The Bible is our best Book on evangelism. Here we have the record of the divine activity moving redemptively in the affairs of men. God said to Jonah: "Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee" (Jonah 3:2). And the book that bears Jonah's name contains the best transcript of the divine formula for revival in any time. Again, Ezekiel tells us: "So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone." And again: "So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army" (Ezek. 37:7, 10). We, today, must lift up our voices like a trumpet crying: "O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord."

Really it is nothing short of a marvel how much preaching some modern men are able to do with so little Scripture. But Spurgeon was right when he said: "We do not enter the pulpit to talk for talk's sake; we have instructions to convey, important to the last degree, and we cannot afford to utter pretty nothings."³

Life-giving sermons must embody divine truth. Our hearers crave sound information upon scriptural subjects.

²Geo. P. Fisher, *History of the Christian Church* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942), p. 124.

³Spurgeon, *Lectures to His Students*, ed. D. O. Fuller (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1945), p. 61.

Accurate explanations of the Holy Scriptures are the contents of a soul-saving message. We must get beyond mere religious trifling.

We note in the biography of Hugh Latimer, bishop of Worcester, the following account:

He vigorously preached the word in court, city, and country; and his sermons shook the whole land. Every kind of sin was cried down by him; and so popular did he become, that when walking the streets of London with his well thumbed Bible in his girdle, the very children greeted him. So great was the crush when he preached at St. Margaret's Westminster, that the pews were broken in pieces. And when he was commanded to preach before the king, it was found necessary to erect a pulpit in the royal gardens to give space to the multitude that thronged to hear him.⁴

To many a modern evangelist, I fear that the old Scotch lady would have said: "Dominie, why dinna ye leave out some of your own stuff, and give us the Word of God?"

Every evangelist, in these days of colleges and seminaries, should deliberately elect courses in biblical theology, biblical exegesis, biblical history, biblical archaeology, and biblical geography. Moreover, he should master the principles of the inductive method of Bible study so that he may have readily at hand the knowledge and the tools for adequate handling of the Word of God. Familiarity with the biblical doctrines of sin, salvation, repentance, sanctification, divine assurance, the resurrection, New Testament ethics, eschatology, the crucial doctrines of Christology, the coming judgment, divine retribution, and the life eternal—all of these—will enable the evangelist to speak with authority on themes that move mens' souls to reconciliation with Almighty God.

⁴John Vaughan, *Life Stories of Remarkable Preachers* (London: James B. Knapp, 1892), pp. 20-21.

Let the evangelist emulate the example of Jesus in His use of the Scriptures. As F. B. Meyer observes, in this connection:

He performed His life-work under its inspiration, defended Himself by its examples, resisted His temptations in its strength, sustained His soul by its comfort, died with its blessed words upon His lips. To Him it was the true and faithful word of God, which could not be broken, but was the foundation and pillar of the truth.⁵

On more than one occasion it is said that Jesus "expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27; cf. Mark 4:34; Luke 24:44-46).

Down through the long sweep of the history of Christian preaching, those centuries that have been marked by moral and religious reform and by great revivals have also been marked by a resurgence of biblical and expository preaching as the means by which such revivals and reforms were promoted. Surely it is the entrance of God's Word that giveth both light and life.

There is a great need in our present times for more extensive use of expository preaching in our evangelism. Too frequently the evangelistic sermon has fallen into disrepute by reason of its lack of solid explanation of Scripture. Why should it be thought incredible that the evangelistic appeal might follow a biblical exposition? I remember vividly two weeks of holiness revival on the campus of my alma mater—Northwest Nazarene College—when Evangelist T. M. Anderson, of Wilmore, Kentucky, was the speaker. (And I still find it profitable, after thirty years, to get out those three-by-five cards on which I made notes on his sermons.) Each one of them was a faithful exposition of some great passage which deals with man's need for divine grace and power. Even as an undergraduate I was profoundly impressed with the

⁵F. B. Meyer, *Expository Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, reprint 1954), p. 72.

demands and promises of the Scriptures. Brother Anderson's faithful expositions made the Bible speak to our needy hearts with incontrovertible authority. Among those texts which he used for exposition were the following: Heb. 10:12-22; Jas. 1:5-6; Heb. 4:1-11; Gal. 2:20; John 8:31-36; Luke 11:1-14; John chapter 9, with verse 31 as the specific text; II Tim. 2:20-21; Luke 13:23-30; Luke 14:15-24; Eph. 4:22-24; I Thess. 4:3; Rom. 5:1-5; II Cor. 6:14—7:1; Psalms 51; John 7:38-39; II Pet. 1:5-8.

Dr. H. Orton Wiley spoke in the afternoon sessions at the Beulah Camp Meeting on the Northern California District for twenty years. Always he gave expositions of Scripture. Usually he would select a specific book of the Bible. Among these were Colossians, Philippians, Ephesians, Hebrews, James, selected psalms, Isaiah, Hosea, and Job. Wiley Chapel, built in his honor, was always well filled for his sessions with the saints.

Joseph H. Smith has written as follows:

An evangelist must be an interpreter of the Scriptures. No gift of narrative, or other ability to entertain, will take the place of the exposition of the Word. The mightiest instrument for the promulgation of salvation, justification or sanctification, is the word of God. The modern holiness movement, with the raising up of evangelists of this character, has greatly revived expository preaching. There are times when textual and topical preaching are in order, but as a rule expository preaching is best for evangelistic work. It requires something more than the aid of commentaries. It takes special illuminating and anointing of the Holy Spirit. There is something in the Pentecostal gift which will open to you the hidden meaning of the word of God.⁶

Many evangelists have used, to great advantage, a series of biographical expositions which make possible a

⁶Joseph H. Smith, *Training in Pentecostal Evangelism* (Philadelphia: Christian Standard Co., Ltd., 1897), p. 44.

strong evangelistic appeal as one comes to the climax. In the Old Testament there are such life stories of men like Moses, Saul, Joseph, Jonah, Samuel, Samson, David, Daniel, Elijah, Elisha, Hosea, and others. In the New Testament such persons as Paul, Peter, Philip, Stephen, Judas, Barnabas, John Mark, and others can be used effectively.

There are many choice passages and chapters which lend themselves definitely to evangelistic exposition. Mention should be made of the miracles and the parables of Jesus; the sixth, thirty-fifth, fifty-third, and fifty-fifth chapters of Isaiah; the eighteenth, thirty-third, and thirty-seventh chapters of Ezekiel (Wesley used effectively Ezek. 36:23-27); the first and fifty-first psalms; many passages in the Prophets and in the Wisdom Literature; the messages to the seven churches of the Apocalypse; the entire Book of First Thessalonians (on account of its holiness emphasis); many choice episodes in the Acts; passages in Romans, Galatians, the Corinthian correspondence, Hebrews, the Petrine Epistles, the Pastoral Epistles, and so on.

With the entire Bible as a gold mine for exposition, why must the evangelist appear to use only the topical sermon as his model and forte for the content and structure of his message? And why must he give way to the use of the same twelve or fifteen sermons everywhere he goes, with these usually occurring in the same identical order for each revival that he preaches?

II. DOCTRINAL AND DOGMATIC

The evangelist must not overlook the significance of doctrine in his ministry. James Burns is surely correct when he observes: "Each revival derives its power from the rediscovery of some forgotten Biblical truth, and coming with all the power of a rediscovery it awakens

in the heart a joyful recognition of its power and a fresh blessing in its acceptance.”⁷

The great preachers of the Bible emphasized doctrine. Amos emphasized *mishpat*—justice. Hosea emphasized *chesed*—“covenant keeping love.” Isaiah emphasized “a willing and ready obedience to walk with one’s God.” Micah summarized all three in his famous quotation from Balaam—Mic. 6:8 (“What doth the Lord require of thee . . . ?”). John the Baptist came preaching a baptism of repentance, saying: “Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” When Jesus came preaching, His text was: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15). The apostles and leaders of the Early Church followed these examples and emphasized three doctrines: the resurrection of Jesus, a personal experience of His risen presence, and the necessity for repentance on the part of their hearers.

Years later Savonarola took up the preaching of repentance, along with which he emphasized prophecy (in his sermons on the Apocalypse) and the coming judgment. Mighty were his exposures of sin. His threefold thesis was: (1) The Church will be renewed, (2) God will strike Italy with chastisement, and (3) This will come shortly. When the crowds became so large that he was forced to move his preaching to the Duomo, he sought to soften his tone, but after an all night of prayer he could not. He attacked the sins of the city, its leaders, his own convent, and even the sins of the popes.

St. Francis of Assisi preached, and urged his *Fraters* to preach, “repentance for the remission of sins.” He exalted Jesus, spoke against pride, greed, sin. He exalted faith, humility, chastity, and love. He fearlessly denounced materialism.

⁷James Burns, *Revivals: Their Laws and Leaders* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909), p. 325.

John Wycliffe, the "morning star of the Reformation," drew up his twenty-four points of doctrinal emphasis. He was a translator and a revivalist, and he challenged the whole basis of sacerdotalism. He placed emphasis upon a clear heart and true devotion to God.

John Tauler's great emphasis was upon the "higher spiritual life."

Martin Luther's great emphasis was upon the doctrine of justification by faith alone. And we must never forget that the Protestant Reformation had both its intellectual and its revivalistic sides. It was basically a return to biblical Christianity. The Reformation saw also a recovery of the doctrine of the person of Christ.

John Calvin's great doctrine was the absolute sovereignty of God.

Ulrich Zwingli's revival made use of both expository preaching and pastoral concern. His choice theme was the doctrine of free grace. He died with his Bible in one hand and a sword in the other, fighting for the Reformers' cause.

John Knox promoted revival in his day by drawing up doctrinal confessions of faith for the people.

John Wesley admitted that it was the lack of preaching on repentance that accounted for his lack of success during his ministry as a high-churchman. He and his brother promoted the great evangelical revival by a strong emphasis upon Christian assurance (the witness of the Spirit) and Christian perfection.

Parenthetically, it is important to note that every religious revival is characterized by a liberating of the human spirit from the bondage of ecclesiasticism.

Jonathan Edwards, in colonial days, combined the powers of his scholarly mind and his fervent heart in a series of thunderous doctrinal sermons on divine judgment. His principal theme, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," caused thousands to cry out for deliverance from sin.

Charles G. Finney's great doctrine was "freedom of the will" and personal responsibility. Your "cannot" is really a "will not," he affirmed. This amounted really to a reemphasis of the doctrine of such prophets as Jeremiah and Ezekiel. And, incidentally, Finney's motto atop the big brown tent which he moved into Oberlin was: "Holiness unto the Lord."

Dwight L. Moody and Reuben A. Torrey emphasized the imperative of personal soul winning.

Spurgeon had a similar emphasis, and organized his entire church for soul winning. He also preached his famous twelve sermons on repentance, and another twelve on holiness.

Mention could be made of still others. Sam Jones's dictum was: "Quit your meanness!" The National Holiness Association evangelists emphasized the theme "Holiness or Hell." Today Billy Graham is ringing the phrase "The Bible says" in every ear that hears him. Hence his doctrine is the authority of the Scriptures.

Such revivalists remind us that the demands of the law must precede the overtures of grace. W. B. Godbey, as a Methodist presiding elder and circuit rider, used to hold five-week meetings. For the first three weeks he would preach "the Sinai Gospel," which was followed by a two-week emphasis upon "the Calvary Gospel" and inviting seekers to the Lord. Other pioneer evangelists used to "dig stumps" for two or three weeks before they expected any harvest of souls.

So let the present-day evangelist declare himself on such doctrines as sin, a full and universal atonement, death, hell, the judgment, the sudden and soon coming of Christ, the necessity of repentance and restitution, the new birth and the baptism with the Holy Spirit, divine love as a master motive, Christ's death and resurrection. Only as he does so will his preaching bring conviction and salvation. Obviously the contemporary evangelist must know how to express the old doctrines in current thought

forms and applications. But still it must be truth through transformed personality in relation to the time of utterance—the ancient doctrines in modern speech, if you please. These will give revival in our time.

The fact that our present generation of youth are adrift in their theology is but the logical result of a former generation's aversion to dogma. One may fear that our present ecumenical quest for unity and for denominational mergers may mean only the throwing overboard of distinctive dogmas of the Christian religion. Charles E. Jefferson so aptly notes:

And so men are throwing away the virgin birth, the miracles, the resurrection, the trinity, the incarnation, redemption through Christ's blood, the New Birth, heaven, hell, and saying the Sermon on the Mount is enough. Others, bolder still, say the Golden Rule is sufficient—give us this and we have all we need. . . .

The Christians of our large cities are not getting the instruction which their fathers received. The children in many cases grow up to be ignorant of the creed of the church, and when they go to college are discovered to be as ignorant of the Scriptures as though they were Hottentots. . . .

The insidious heretic of our day is the man who quietly drops dogma out of his preaching and says nothing about it.⁸

He is sure that there is a definite causal relation between our widespread spiritual desolation and our widespread indifference to dogma. So he affirms: "The man who would be a great preacher is the man who keeps dogma at the front."⁹ He then offers Dr. James Orr's definition of dogma as being: "Doctrine clearly stated and ecclesiastically sanctioned."¹⁰ He is quite sure, and quite right, in saying: "Dogmatic teaching has always been a source of power. No men have ever left their mark upon this

⁸Chas. E. Jefferson, *The Minister as a Prophet* (New York: Thos. Y. Crowell and Co., 1905), pp. 157-62.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 163.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

world who have not had a definite and clean-cut creed."¹¹ He further states: "What the men in our theological seminaries need most of all is a thorough grounding in theology."¹²

We cannot meet, conquer, answer, or vanquish the dogmatism of Karl Marx and his followers without solid spears and swords of Christian dogma. We cannot conquer with our hands filled with "mush" and our minds filled with "mist."

Every man of spiritual power, from Ignatius to Roy T. Williams and Billy Graham, has been mighty in his dogmatism. And before them the apostles were dogmatists. Note Peter's declaration in Acts 4:12, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Consider John's definition as to "who is a liar" in I John 2:22-23. Recognize, if you please, Paul's narrow-mindedness in Gal. 1:8; and its deliberate repetition in verse 9: "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." It is worth noting that Paul's epistolary form in each of his letters puts dogma first, then ethics second. For an example of the dogmatism of Jesus one might make a study of the times when He used those "inexorable cannots" to declare spiritual impossibilities. For example, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24; Luke 16:13).

Jefferson, having called our attention to the importance of dogma, concludes: "I do not believe a man has a right to preach who cannot speak the great truths of the Christian revelation in accents which do not waver and with an emphasis that burns with fervent heat."¹³

It was none other than Charles H. Spurgeon who, in his lectures to his students, said: "Brethren, if you are not theologians you are in your pastorates just nothing

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 164.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 166.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 185.

at all.”¹⁴ Spurgeon then notes that a man led by the Holy Spirit will “give clear testimony to all the doctrines which constitute . . . the Gospel. . . . Brethren, [he pleads] **first and above all things, keep the plain evangelical doctrines.**”¹⁵ He warns against trifling, the discussion of old wives’ fables, and the insinuations of doubts. He urges doctrinal teaching that is clear and unmistakable on such themes as: Christ, justification, grace, man’s fall, the new birth, forgiveness through the atonement, salvation by faith, and Christ crucified.

John A. Broadus is sure that “there is much so-called revival preaching which sadly lacks this character,” and describes it as

mere clap-trap and sensationalism, tirades of cheap wit and vulgar denunciation, extreme and one-sided statements, half-truths and specious errors—all these infect as a deadly poison a large proportion of that which is called evangelistic preaching. An earnest and loving, but at the same time faithful and strong, presentation of pure Bible truth on the great matters of sin, judgment, atonement, salvation, regeneration, grace, repentance, and faith is the distinctive and emphatic need of the revival preaching of our age.¹⁶

We may say that if the evangelistic trumpet gives an uncertain sound there will be little revival success. Verbiage may be a covering for theological ignorance, and rhetorical flourishes may produce what Spurgeon called “second hand wind-bags.”

Finally, the evangelistic message must be:

III. SANE, SINCERE, SOUND, AND SPECIFIC

1. *The evangelistic message must be sane.* By this term “sane” we intend just what the dictionary defines

¹⁴*Op. cit.*, p. 63.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.

¹⁶*On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (New York: Harper and Row, 1870, 1944), pp. 308-9.

it to mean: "Mentally sound; not deranged, proceeding from a sound mind. Sober, lucid, rational and unperverted" (Winston's Dictionary). We should understand the term to be the opposite of "silly." And when applied to evangelistic sermons and their titles it would rule out the purely speculative, the spectacular, and the sensational. Let the evangelist deal with solid truth. And let him speak in a language elevated enough for respect and yet simple enough for comprehension.

It is well to remember that eccentricity never takes the place of exegesis. To attempt to fill a church by resorting to cheap publicity makes one appear to be a mere trifler—announcing that the evangelist will speak on such fantastic subjects as: "The Price of a Haircut"—Samson's seven shorn locks; "The First Submarine Ride"—when preaching about Jonah; "The Descent of Dives" in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus; "How Far Is Hell from Here?"—when arguing that it is just beneath the earth's crust, seventeen and one-half miles down; "The Ferryboat over Jordan"; "Who Will Go to Hell from This City?" "The Ponderosity of the Inconsequential"—sand is weighty: "A Fishin' Lesson," etc., etc.

Andrew Blackwood offers the following examples of such absurdity:

A young fellow who afterwards resigned the ministry held forth about "The Sex Life of Samson." An older man spoke about "A Night With the Witch of Endor." A third "preached" about John the Baptist as "The Man Who Lost His Head at a Dance." A fourth perpetrated a pun about his home town: "Putting the Ill in Clarksville," and again drew a crowd to laugh about "The Middle-age Spread." And yet we wonder why thoughtful laymen quit coming to church!¹⁷

Sane evangelistic messages would naturally embody a valid use of sound logic. Argumentation in the sermon

¹⁷*Preparation of Sermons* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948), p. 93.

would reveal respect for the intelligence of one's audience as well as the principles of formal logic. James Arminius uses and shows knowledge of formal logic in his great dissertation on the seventh chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans. And consequently this little-read dissertation is the best thing written on that problematic chapter.

Of course the evangelist must never be a hobbyist or a mere faddist. Nor can he afford to be a chaser of novelties or a dealer in philosophical, theological, or prophetic speculations. Much less can he afford to take valuable time to rant at the dress of women or the foibles of men. When an evangelist tells his congregation not to make plans for life beyond April of the year 1953, since he is certain that the Lord's return will take place then, one can understand why he would be reluctant to accept a repeat engagement with that particular church. Whenever a church calls an evangelist, it wants someone who knows how to preach a gospel message that exalts Christ and challenges sober men.

Concerning the soul-winning sermon, Blackwood says: "Soul winning sermons are notable for simplicity, [they appeal to] human interest, [they make use of] worthy illustrations, [and] the evangelist preaches for the salvation of the sinner, not for the salvation of the sermon."¹⁸ He is quite certain that a sensible evangelistic sermon must be composed of something more than "three wisecracks and a filler. . . . The sermon that is to win recruits must be the product of hard work in the spirit of prayer."¹⁹

A sane evangelistic message starts with the felt need of the hearer and leads directly to Christ as the Satisfaction for that need. It should never become a mere collection of wooden abstractions, or pious generalizations, or

¹⁸*Evangelism in the Home Church* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1942), pp. 83-84.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.

pedantic platitudes. It must embody both instruction and exhortation. Usually it will preach grace to the sinner and ethics to the saint.

The evangelist who keeps the anointing of the Spirit and remains sensitive to His leadership will be saved from all these trifling insanities.

2. *The message must be sincere.* People will forgive many faults in a minister but they will not tolerate insincerity. There is always a place for a good sense of humor, but a "foxy" preacher who engages in so-called psychological manipulations and tricks is soon suspected and seldom respected by men and women of good sense.

The sincere evangelist is no trifler. He deals in perfect frankness and fairness with his hearers. Souls are at stake. He is never willing to bring his ministry and message under contempt by playing the buffoon or the clown. He is never willing to busy himself with entertaining his listeners by the use of either theatrical measures or mimicry. When hungry souls ask for bread, what a pity to give them nothing but stones!

Dr. A. M. Hills tells of an ancient king who busied himself inventing a superior brand of mousetrap, not realizing that a man who is called to be a king must be more than an inventor of trifles. Likewise the true evangelist will avoid all suspicion of insincerity if he puts the energy of manhood and the purity of a good conscience into all his messages. He will not be content with less than his best for Christ. From all unreality and pretense may the Lord deliver us!

Let the evangelist seek always to convince his hearers that he is genuinely manifesting a sincere concern for the welfare of the auditor, just as surely as the doctor seeks to save his patient, and the lawyer seeks to win his case.

It must never be said of him: "How fluently does nonsense trickle from his tongue!" for he must not build with mere hay, wood, and stubble. Therefore let no one

suspect the genuineness of your solicitude and the earnestness of your soul travail for his salvation.

3. *The message must be sound.* Paul urged Titus to speak "the things which become sound doctrine" and to use "sound speech that cannot be condemned" (Titus 2:1, 8). We have already noted the importance of sound doctrine, but let us also note that doctrinal preaching must be fair and scriptural. It must embody as honest interpretations of the Word of God as our poor, fallible human minds can give.

The sincere evangelist has a wholesome respect for the Word of God, and he is convinced that "a text without a context is a mere pretext." He obeys the laws of biblical interpretation and exegesis. He refuses to handle the Word of God deceitfully; and, by manifestation of the truth, he seeks to commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God (cf. II Cor. 4:2). Thus he shuns, as he would the plague, all excessive allegorizing or illegitimate spiritualizing of the Scriptures.

The evangelist must be careful not to misrepresent either the character of his Lord or the nature of God's government. Wrong portraits of God serve only to aid the cause of Satan. Some of those whom William James calls the "morbid minded" souls, have been convinced by Satan and an unfair evangelist that simply because they failed to seek the Lord at the closing service of a special evangelistic campaign they then and there crossed the "deadline" and committed the unpardonable sin, never to hear God's call to salvation again. What a tragedy!

Many of our modern films of the life of Christ seem to picture Judas as craven and Jesus as little more than a medieval consumptive. At the same time they turn Mary of Magdala into something of a designing woman, seeking by her sex appeal to trap even the Master. What inexcusable distortion! From all such let the earnest evangelist withdraw and never for a moment be found guilty.

This quality of the evangelistic message demands that it shall be founded squarely on truth and right—orthodox, safe, valid. The evangelist must inspect carefully the source and the implications of that which he would proclaim. Here is the danger of borrowing from so-called "authorities." Many an evangelist of the Arminian-Wesleyan persuasion would scorn the thought of preaching hyper-Calvinistic doctrines of imputation, unconditional election, and sinning security; but the sad fact is that these same evangelists take Calvinistic eschatology and preach it as if it were the final truth respecting the second advent of Christ and the nature of the millennium.

4. *The message must be specific.* The Apostle Paul preached against "specific sins" in his evangelism, and he named in his letters those things which his readers must not be guilty of (cf. I Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21). The contemporary evangelist cannot hope to bring a man under conviction for his sin if he refuses to name the thing of which such a sinner is guilty. Nathan faced David with the specific declaration, "Thou art the man" (II Sam. 12:7).

To the student preacher in his classes, Spurgeon advised:

Let him never treat sin as though it were a trifle or a misfortune, but let him set it forth as exceeding sinful. Let him go into particulars, not superficially glancing at evil in the gross, but *mentioning various sins in detail*, especially those current at the time: such as that all-devouring hydra of drunkenness, which devastates our land; lying, which in the form of slander abounds on all sides; and licentiousness, which must be mentioned with holy delicacy, and yet needs to be denounced unsparingly. . . .

Aim at the heart. Probe the wound and touch the very quick of the soul. Spare not the sterner themes, for men must be wounded before they can be healed, and slain before they can be made alive. No man will ever put on the robe of Christ's righteousness till he is stripped of his fig leaves, nor will he wash in the fount of mercy till he

perceives his filthiness. Therefore, my brethren, we must not cease to declare the law, its demands, its threatenings, and the sinner's multiplied breaches thereof.²⁰

Charles G. Finney would probably wish to add the following advice: "Every sinner has some hiding place, some entrenchment where he lingers. He is in possession of some darling lie with which he is quieting himself. Let the minister find it out and get it away, either in the pulpit or in private, or the man will go to hell in his sins, and his blood will be found in the minister's skirts."²¹

Dwight L. Moody let it plainly be known that he had no use for "smoking, chewing, drinking, horse-racing, dancing, card-playing Christians."²²

Such examples and exhortations could be multiplied indefinitely, but let the modern evangelist listen to Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah, Hosea, and Malachi, as they deal in denunciation of the specific sins that characterized false prophet, priest, ruler, and commoner in Israel and Judah. And let him know that similar preaching today will bring on a similar conviction for sins and promote revivals—as well as the persecution of God's messenger.

Let the present-day evangelist read again the invectives of Jesus against the sins of the Pharisees, and the warnings against the sins of the seven churches of Asia. Or let him stand in the wilderness of Judea as John the Baptist lifts his stentorian voice against the "snakes and vipers" of his age. Or, further, let him read what Peter and John have written against the sins of men; and let him do just what Jude enjoins: "And of some have

²⁰*Op. cit.*, pp. 321-22. Note that Spurgeon did not include the use of tobacco (cigars), of which he himself was guilty. Perhaps those of us who know the findings of modern science are less excusable than he at this point.

²¹*Lectures on Revivals of Religion* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1868), p. 191.

²²*Paul Moody, My Father: An Intimate Portrait of D. L. Moody* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1938), pp., 164-65.

compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 22-23). Or let him heed Paul's admonition to Timothy, "Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Tim. 4:2).

One thing further. If our evangelistic preaching is to be specific, it must not only designate the specific sin, but it must locate the specific sinner. As Blackwood so aptly states it:

Evangelistic preaching is personal. It has nothing to do with personalities, in the offensive sense of the term. But the effectiveness of the soul-winning sermon depends largely on "the individualizing power." . . .

Be personal! The man in the pew is a human being. To some theologians mankind may be only an abstraction. Sin may seem impersonal. But to the . . . evangelist the friend in the pew is one who counts, both here and in heaven. His soul is worth more than all things on earth. His sin is a tragedy second to none short of hell. . . .

"Individualizing power" has marked every soul-winning preacher from the Lord Jesus and the Apostle Peter to William Booth and Gipsy Smith. Where the impractical divine can address sixty persons so as to make each of them feel that the sermon related to men always and everywhere except here and now, the soul-winner can speak to six hundred or six thousand so as to make every man feel that the message is for him personally. "Thou art the man!" "I have a word from God for thee!" On the human level this ability to reach the heart and conscience of the man in the pew is probably the chief asset of the soul-winning preacher. . . .

Evangelistic preaching is direct. It is fearless. In the best sense it is personal.²³

Let the evangelist be faithful to the leadings and promptings of a faithful Holy Spirit and sin will be unmasked and sinners located. He has come to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. But no one believes in an evangelist or his message when he is fearful

²³Op. cit., pp. 85-86.

to call sin by its true name and warn sinners of the peril of their condition before God.

These are the characteristics of the soul-winning message: (1) It is scriptural and expository, embodying and explaining the sure word of God; (2) It is doctrinal and dogmatic, setting forth the great verities of the faith in no uncertain tones; and (3) It is sane logic, sincere pleading, sound in its reasoning, and specific in its application.

Let each of us covenant today with God, who called us and thrust us into His ministry, that we will assuredly "do the work of an evangelist" and "make full proof of . . . [our] ministry."

THE WORLD'S BIBLE

*Christ has no hands but our hands
To do His work today;
He has no feet but our feet
To lead men in His way;
He has no tongue but our tongues
To tell men how he died;
He has no help but our help
To bring them to His side.*

*We are the only Bible
The careless world will read;
We are the sinner's gospel;
We are the scoffer's creed;
We are the Lord's last message,
Given in deed and word.
What if the type is crooked?
What if the print is blurred?*

*What if our hands are busy
With other work than His?
What if our feet are walking
Where sin's allurements is?*

*What if our tongues are speaking
Of things His lips would spurn?
How can we hope to help Him
And hasten His return?*

—ANNIE JOHNSON FLINT

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4

The METHOD

Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

—ISA. 1:16-20

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

—ISA. 55:1-3

Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

—ISA. 55:6-7

These scriptures have been selected, not for the purpose of exposition, but for example. They illustrate the evangelist's message and, more particularly, his method.

The method of the God-used evangelist is summarized in the word *persuasion*. Paul declared it when he wrote: "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (II Cor. 5:11). He was also sure that "the goodness of God . . . leadeth to repentance" (Rom. 2:4).

Every true ambassador of Christ is charged with the responsibility for the proclamation of a message of reconciliation, and the clause that leaps in persuasive pleading from his lips is: "Be ye reconciled to God" (II Cor. 5:20).

Isaiah was one of the greatest of pleaders for such a reconciliation.

Now when God would invade "the citadel of man's soul" He finds about it three great barriers, comparable to the water moat, the stone wall, and the defending army of an ancient castle. Or we may picture it geometrically as three concentric circles about a central point (the man himself). The outer circle is the barrier of man's *intellect*, which, preoccupied with its own thoughts or filled with doubts and disputations, is not susceptible to God's entrance. The second circle is comparable to man's *temperament*, or his emotional nature, which revolts against and is antagonistic to God's love. The third, and inner circle, is comparable to a man's *will*, which must act to surrender the citadel of man's soul to God if ever that man is to be redeemed and possessed by God.

So the evangelist finds himself, as God's ambassador of reconciliation, facing these three barriers on the part of every sinner. And consequently his task becomes threefold and requires the use of a threefold method to persuade men for Christ. He must "inform the intellect"; he must "arouse the emotions"; and he must "motivate the will." This must be the method of the evangelist in every revival, and the nature of his messages severally within that revival. Each outer barrier must be removed ere the inner can be approached. The last to surrender is the will, which represents the man in action. And active submission to the Saviour is what each evangelist seeks to accomplish. At the very outset, then, we may say:

I. THE EVANGELIST MUST INFORM THE INTELLECT

Like Isaiah of old, he must exhort: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord" (Isa. 1:18). Man, because of his first disobedience in choosing the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, has been deprived, to a large degree, of that better source of information—intuitive insight. He thus finds himself shut up to a lesser, more cumbersome and toiling way to information—discursive reasoning.

Because of this, the evangelistic method calls for information. And information has reference to "communicated knowledge or intelligence." Hence a sermon is defined variously as "the truth of God, voiced by a chosen personality, to meet human needs,"¹ or "an oral address to the popular mind, on religious truth contained in the Scriptures, and elaborately treated with a view to persuasion."² Preaching may therefore be defined as: "The

¹Andrew Blackwood, *Preparation of Sermons* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948), p. 13.

²Austin Phelps, *Theory of Preaching* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1881), p. 28.

spoken communication of divine truth with a view to persuasion."³

The mind and understanding of the sinner must be informed if ever he is to be convinced of his need, awakened to his peril, and moved to commit himself to God. He must be informed about God—His severity and goodness. He must be informed about man—his sinfulness and his lostness. He must be informed about sin—its deceitfulness and its power to corrupt. He must be informed about a Saviour who loved the guilty sinner enough to die for him, thus providing an atonement for his soul. He must be informed about God's desire to forgive his sins and cleanse his depraved nature. These are the great facts of evangelistic information.

Now the act of informing calls for facts, *facts*, **FACTS**—truth made clear, truth made valid, truth made real, truth made vital. But the evangelist cannot inform another mind until first his own has been informed. And truth, to be communicated, must be clearly grasped by the one who would communicate. Hence the evangelist himself must search for truth as one who seeks for hidden treasure. And since no one can preach to the limits of his knowledge, and since, for most of us, our knowledge is severely limited, our quest must ever be for more abundant knowledge. As we know the truth, we are made free; and as we are able to communicate that truth unto others, they too are made free.

John A. Kern tells of a lad who compared his present and former pastors by saying: "Mr. A preaches as if he were using all he had been able to gather up; but Mr. B preaches as if he had a great deal more than he was putting into the sermon."⁴ Evidently the margin of knowledge was greater with Mr. B than with Mr. A.

³T. Harwood Pattison, *The Making of the Sermon* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publishing Society), 1898), p. 3.

⁴*The Ministry to the Congregation* (Cincinnati: Jennings and Graham, 1907), p. 313.

The successful evangelist is committed to a lifetime of hard study for the sake of the souls he would win. For if he would inform others, he needs at least four great tools: (a) a well-stored memory, (b) a creative imagination, (c) a logical reasoning ability, and (d) a facile and fluent speech. Recall, vision, insight, expression—all must aid him as he seeks to persuade men. The memory must be stored with an inexhaustible fund of facts and experiences. The imagination must be disciplined for both invention and discernment. The reasoning faculty must display both logical insight and direction. The speech must have a ready ability for utterance and a fund of ideas that are worth stating. In short, Evangelist John William Doe must set out to acquire an adequate vocabulary for the statement of ideas and truth. To store the memory he must read widely and observe keenly. To awaken the imagination he must meditate at length, for inability of expression is often due to lack of both forethought and afterthought. To reason correctly he must perceive relationships readily and keenly. There are solemn and significant facts aplenty in this universe. These can be set before the sinner's mind to turn his thoughts to God and things eternal. Let the evangelist find them!

Time was when two "Harrys" were Nazarene pastors in Chicago—Harry Morrow at Woodlawn Church and Harry Jessop at Austin Church. On a Saturday afternoon Harry Jessop called Harry Morrow to ask him what he would be preaching about on Sunday. When informed of Morrow's text and topic his friend asked: "And have you any points?" Right there is the rub, as some would say. As preachers we must have points—facts, information. Else we cannot persuade the sinner.

Since God is the only absolutely original Person in the universe, our evangelist will often find himself in prayer that God may give him both wisdom and understanding as he seeks to impart saving truth to others. The evangelist who will not study will be stunted. Lifelong

learning is imperative. At best, "Ve get too soon oldt undt too late schmart," as the old German said. But God bids us preach, and He will give the word if we will wait upon Him.

Vividly do I recall the day when I was ordained by Dr. Roy T. Williams. How could one ever forget those piercing black eyes that searched the soul while he spoke saying: "Young man, remember! Whenever God wants to give you a sermon, it must come out of your own storehouse of knowledge. Therefore I solemnly charge you now that, if the time ever comes in your life when you cannot buy both food and books, you shall buy, not food, but books!" Since then I have tried to give myself to reading. The first five years in the pastorate I averaged a book each week. Even with that kind of schedule, however, one finds it necessary to pray often: "God fill my mouth with worthy stuff, and nudge me when I've said enough."

The evangelist ought to be able to say with Descartes: "I am a substance which thinks." Yet contact with some embryonic evangelists leads one to believe that some of them do not. It is urgently necessary for the preacher to get into full sympathy with the truth he seeks to proclaim. It must grip his soul until it moves him to tears or burns like a fire within him. Unless it does, what he says will stir nobody. Do not sell your ministry short by refusing to study and think. Use your will to apply your intellect to the task of persistent and protracted thought. If you are to gather facts and truth, you must experience them. So live! Observe! Glean what Halford Luccock calls "the harvest of the eye."⁵ And learn to read creatively. Stretch your mind to its subject!

Yes, you must inform the intellect; and the first intellect to be informed is your own. Thereafter you may

⁵*In the Minister's Work Shop* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1944), p. 104; cf. Chap. X.

do so with the intellect of the sinner you seek to evangelize. May we also suggest that one way to get the attention of serious-minded seekers after truth is to give them something to attend to.

The evangelist must realize that, to persuade, he must convince. We cannot overlook the instrumental nature of truth. Not for the sake of information only do we strive with the sinner's intellect. We seek to arouse his interest in his own salvation by means of gripping and challenging ideas. Every guilty sinner needs to be "stung wide awake" by some sudden thought or fact. The message must probe his conscience awake to eternal truth, and his soul to its spiritual needs.

Facts presented must be vitally related to the purpose of the sermon. Let us learn to present truth in accordance with the laws of thought and persuasive speech. State the proofs, and state them plainly! Then be ready always to give to any man that asketh a reason of the hope that is within us.

The material to use to inform the intellect we have already stated in an earlier chapter under the categories of Scripture, truth, and doctrine. This means that the evangelist must pay the price to become both a Bible student and a theologian. He must memorize much scripture. And along with this, one should commit to memory many stanzas of the grand old hymns of the Church. One must learn to observe widely, and he must be able to speak with accuracy about details. Then he can say with Isaiah: "Come now, and let us reason together." And by reasoning he may arouse emotion. Reason and emotion are never totally separated even on the part of the most rationalistic person.

II. THE EVANGELIST MUST AROUSE THE EMOTIONS

This is the next battle line for the citadel of man's soul. If he has done his work well with the intellect, the

evangelist should now have an ally in the hearer's imagination.

The great truths of the gospel must be made to fire the imagination and to capture it for Christ. No great decision in human life is ever made without emotion. The greatest of all decisions will never be made without it.

We do not mean to indicate that the evangelistic preacher, like the Hollywood star on a television program, seeks deliberately to stir the emotions for the sake of playing with the hearer's feelings. Our churches are already full of spiritual *hedonists* and thrill seekers. Rather, his purpose is definitely to arouse the sinner to action.

On the other hand, we must never be frightened by those who tell us we are using the power of suggestion upon our hearers. Of course we are! Men are moved and activated always by suggestion. Only when the imagination has been captured and the emotions aroused does the will respond. If the suggestion we make is true and redemptive, the result will be creative and wholesome.

To capture the imagination, the evangelist must be able to illustrate effectively. Illustrations dealing with human experience and personal relationships are best. And the best of these are still found in the Bible. George Whitefield had to be more than a "dry-as-dust intellectual" to have people journey long before daybreak with lantern in hand to hear him preach at five o'clock in the morning. John Newton said: "I bless God that I have lived in his time. Many are the winter mornings I have got up at four to attend his services at five."⁶

John Vaughan relates the following incident about Whitefield:

As an anecdotal preacher Mr. Whitefield copied his *Divine Master* to a great extent. He was a word painter, and many of his pictures were exceedingly natural and

⁶Quoted by John Vaughan in *Life Stories of Remarkable Preachers* (London: James B. Knapp, 1892), p. 28.

telling. In one of his sermons he described a blind man unconsciously walking nearer and nearer to an awful precipice. The picture was so vividly painted, that all present listened with breathless attention, until Lord Chesterfield broke the silence by shouting, "Good heavens! he's over."

On another occasion, when preaching in Philadelphia, he so graphically depicted a ship in a storm, that some sailors present bawled out with all their might, "Take to the Long Boat."⁷

Lorenzo Dow was known in his day as "the crazy preacher." But he surely knew how to awaken the imagination of his hearers. Perhaps it was his eccentricity, but more probably his downright earnestness, that attracted such large audiences. I am not sure the following incident is in keeping with our early emphasis upon sane and sound preaching, but William Taylor in his *Model Preacher* relates this story from the life of Dow:

At one time, when Lorenzo Dow preached under a large spruce pine in South Carolina, he announced another appointment for preaching in the same place, on that day twelve months later. The year passed, and as Lorenzo was entering the neighborhood the evening preceding the appointment, he overtook a colored boy, who was blowing a long tin horn, and could, as I have often heard them, send forth a blast with rise, and swell, and cadence, which waked the echoes of the distant hills. Overtaking the blower, Dow said to him:

"What is your name, sir?"

"My name, Gabriel, sah," replied the brother in ebony.

"Well, Gabriel, have you been to Church Hill?"

"Yes, Massa; I'se been dar many time."

"Do you remember a big spruce tree on that hill?"

"O yes, Massa; I knows dat pine."

"Did you know that Lorenzo Dow had an appointment to preach under that tree tomorrow?"

"O yes, massa; everybody knows dat."

"Well, Gabriel, I am Lorenzo Dow, and if you'll take your horn, and go to-morrow morning and climb into that pine tree, and hide yourself among the branches before the

⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

people begin to gather, and wait till I call your name, and then blow such a blast with your horn as I heard you blow a minute ago, I'll give you a dollar. Will you do it, Gabriel?"

"Yes, Massa; I takes dat dollar."

Gabriel, like Zacchaeus, was hid away in the tree-top in due time. An immense concourse of persons of all sizes and colors assembled at the appointed hour, and Dow preached on the judgment of the last day. By his power of description he wrought the multitude up to the opening scenes of the resurrection and grand assize, at the call of the trumpet peals which were to wake the sleeping nations. Then, said he, "Suppose, my dying friends, that *this* should be the hour? Suppose you should hear, at *this moment*, the sound of Gabriel's trumpet?" Sure enough, at that moment the trump of Gabriel sounded. The women shrieked and many fainted; the men sprang up and stood aghast; some ran; others fell and cried for mercy; and all felt for a time, that the judgment was set, and the books were opened. Dow stood and watched the driving storm until the fright abated; some had discovered the colored angel who had caused the alarm, quietly perched on the limb of the old spruce, and wanted to get him down to whip him. Dow then resumed his theme, saying, "I forbid all persons from touching that boy up there. If a colored boy with a tin horn can frighten you almost out of your wits, what will you do when you shall hear the trumpet thunder of the Archangel? How will ye be able to stand in the great day of the wrath of God?"⁸

Shoemaker is quite convinced that an effective appeal to the imagination is more apt to provoke faith than is an appeal either to the intellect or to the feelings.⁹ If the emotions are to become our allies in the winning of that guilty sinner, his imagination must be kindled to light their fires.

Broadus, while urging that the preacher shall ever keep his imagination closely bound to reality, still is sure that imagination is the indispensable quality of effective

⁸Vaughan, *op. cit.*, pp. 298-300.

⁹Samuel M. Shoemaker, *With the Holy Spirit and with Fire* (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), p. 69.

preaching. It is indispensable, he thinks, in the construction of the sermon, and it is indispensable for its effective delivery. He states: "It is . . . mainly through imagination that we touch the feelings and thereby bring truth powerfully to bear upon the will."¹⁰ And again he says: "Sympathetic imagination lends appropriateness to preaching."¹¹ But especially let us note that both power of utterance and spiritual vision find their source in the quickening Holy Spirit. Broadus declares:

Imagination finds its inspiration in the "upper-room" today, as on that wonderful day of Pentecost. . . . The eyes of their faith were opened and they saw reality as they had never seen it before. The invisible spiritual world became more real than the upper-room; it was no longer remote or future. . . . Henceforth their imaginations—power to see and to relate facts—were given unclouded vision, their wills the strength of a rushing wind, and their speech the glow and energy of fire.¹²

We should like to offer here the following formula:

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{Imagination} + \text{Feeling} \\ \hline = \text{Elegance} \\ \text{Good Taste} \end{array}$$

Or stated in Broadus' words it would read: "Elegance of style is the product of imagination, alone or in combination with passion, and operating under the control of good taste."¹³ If we are to see the iron gate in the emotional stone wall of the castle of man's soul swing open to the evangelistic invitation, the imagination must open it from the inside!

¹⁰John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (New York: Harper and Row, 1870), p. 291.

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 269.

The evangelist must often resort to emotional persuasion. The observation of Spurgeon is pertinent here. He says:

The class requiring logical argument is small compared with the number of those who need to be pleaded with by way of *emotional persuasion*. They require not so much reasoning, as heart argument—which is logic set on fire. You must argue with them as a mother pleads with her boy that he will not grieve her, or as a fond sister entreats a brother to return to their father's home and seek reconciliation: argument must be quickened into persuasion by the living warmth of love.

Cold logic has its force, but when made red-hot with affection, the power of tender argument is inconceivable. . . . When passionate zeal has carried the man himself away, his speech becomes an irresistible torrent, sweeping all before it. A man known to be godly and devout, and felt to be large-hearted and self-sacrificing, has a power in his very person, and his advice and recommendation carry weight because of his character; but when he comes to plead and to persuade, even to tears, his influence is wonderful, and God the Holy Spirit yokes it into His service.¹⁴

We shall not be able to cause others to feel deeply about the truth we proclaim unless we feel that way ourselves. We cannot stir another's emotions unless our own are greatly stirred. It is no idle observation that the successful evangelist must have both a keen and disciplined imagination and a strong emotional nature. We must *plead* with sinners to keep them out of hell! Somehow we must crash the shell of their outward emotional indifference. Right well does Faris D. Whitsell exhort us:

Do not be afraid to weep over sinners. Believe that men are lost, condemned under the wrath of God and in imminent peril every minute they live apart from Christ. Love the souls of men as Christ loved them. Never be pro-

¹⁴*Lectures to His Students*, ed. D. O. Fuller (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1945), p. 327.

fessional in the invitation. Pray over the lost until you can feel the pangs of hell laying hold upon them. Yearn for the salvation of the lost even as God yearns for them. Plead as constrained by the love of Christ. Very few men today can plead with power. It is a lost skill! We must pay a price. We cannot plead unless we bleed—bleed under the burden for souls, bleed with compassion, bleed with tender-heartedness and melting love.¹⁵

Jesus himself wept much over sinners; let not the earthly ambassador of Jesus be otherwise than his Master. Love is the force that melts indifference. Thus great hearts are the main qualification for great evangelists. Let us always feel deeply and sincerely the situation of souls that are lost. Let us join in the heartthrob of Jeremiah as he cries out of the depths of his concern: "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord" (Jer. 22: 29).

The third and last enemy to the conquest of the castle of man's soul is the will. This is like the defending army within the walls.

III. THE EVANGELIST MUST MOTIVATE THE WILL

Let the evangelist preach always for a verdict. It is a decision to surrender the heart to Christ that we must win. Surely Andrew Blackwood has stated it well: "An evangelistic preaching is urgent. The appeal is to the will. The will is the entire personality in action. One seeks to win the hearer as a man, soul and body, for time and eternity. . . . Whatever the tone-color of the sermon, the aim is to move the will of the hearer Christward."¹⁶

When the evangelist reaches his climax and sounds what John Henry Jowett calls "the wooing note," he is

¹⁵*Sixty-five Ways to Give Evangelistic Invitations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1945), p. 29.

¹⁶*Evangelism in the Home Church* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1942), p. 88.

engaged in what might also be called "the salesmanship of the gospel." Now he seeks for that spiritual signature on the dotted line. And, strictly speaking, there is no such thing as mass evangelism. The evangelistic appeal may be spoken to a crowd, but as we have already noted, the response must be personal. And only an individual person can say, "Yes," to God. Hence the evangelist makes his overtures and offers personal, and appeals to the individual sinner. The attack must now be directed to the very citadel of man's soul, his will. There is only one place where the prayer: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done" can really be actualized. It is in the inner man, the heart of the person himself.

Let us recognize that neither Communism nor Christianity permits of any neutrality. To refuse to decide in favor of is surely to decide against. Here, then, comes the "either-or" crisis of the evangelistic encounter. The dangers of refusing what God offers to do for the soul should be clearly pressed home to the sinner. As Bryan Green observes: "If we refuse to be right with Reality, then the responsibility is ours: we must take the consequences, and we ought to be afraid of them. The motive of fear cannot be eliminated from human life."¹⁷

An analysis of the "ladder of motivation" for being a Christian shows that there are but five rungs in it. They are the five great motives for being a Christian. And the first of these is *fear*. Yet, lest someone thinks the appeal to fear is improper, may I simply remind him that it is often resorted to by psychiatrists for therapeutic reasons, by politicians for democratic reasons, and by wise parents who would teach the child the dangers of playing with fire. Then why rule it out as improper for evangelism? Suppose a man's first step toward God is because he is afraid of hell and sin; is it not still a step in the right

¹⁷*The Practice of Evangelism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), p. 81.

direction? And do we expect him to remain always on the bottom rung of the ladder of motivation?

Dr. William S. Sadler used to ask his students at McCormick Seminary, "Gentlemen, if men must fear something, why not let them fear hell? If men must hate something, why not let them hate sin? And if men must fight someone, why not let them fight the devil?"¹⁸

So let the evangelist awaken in the heart of every sinner a fear of the wrath of God upon sin, a fear of the damning and devastating power of sin, and a fear of the eternal destiny of sinners. Let men fear the "resurrection of damnation"! Let them fear to come to the judgment day with sins yet unconfessed and unforgiven.

But, secondly, there is also the universal desire for *happiness*. To this let the evangelist also make his appeal. It is the second rung of the ladder of motivation. Sin begets sorrow and suffering. Happiness may not be had if one seeks to live his life at cross-purposes with reality. A clear conscience is imperative, and only godliness begets such true happiness. The soul winner must surely appeal to this motive.

In the third place, almost everybody wants (at least in his saner moments) to be truly *good*. Everybody admires goodness, unless he himself is utterly reprobate. Here, then, is a golden doorknob to the citadel of man's soul. Let the evangelist take firm hold upon it. Christianity brings goodness because it makes one godly. Let the soul winner tell men definitely how to become good. They will then mount this third rung of the ladder.

A higher motive for becoming a Christian is the sense of *duty*. Man's moral nature approves the life of righteousness. The categorical imperative within him tells him he ought to find the right and do it. This approving

¹⁸Classroom lecture, Dec. 11, 1945, McCormick Seminary, Chicago.

of the law with one's mind, as Paul tells us, can eventually lead a man to despair of his own futile efforts to achieve self-righteousness, and cause him to cry to God for deliverance from his bondage and slavery under sin (cf. Romans 7). Duty says: "You ought to be a Christian, because it is right that you should be one." And reverence for duty is surely a much higher motive than the mere desire for happiness or goodness. Let the evangelist make this plain, and let him appeal to the sinner's sense of duty. But, of course, duty for duty's sake may leave one only a legalistic Pharisee. There is a higher motive than this—which brings us to the fifth rung of our ladder.

We may appeal to the constraining love of Christ. There is nothing higher on the ladder of motivation than *love*. As Flewelling has aptly put it: "God has set us in the world to learn to love him, to love him so much that we will want to be like him. He desires in us, not a passion to escape a divine wrath, but a passion to be like Jesus Christ."¹⁹ Here is the true romance of salvation. To fall in love with Jesus as did St. Francis of Assisi; to say with the Apostle Paul: "The love of Christ constraineth us" (II Cor. 5:14); or with John the Beloved: "We love him, because he first loved us" (I John 4:19), is to discover an inner compulsion that lifts our living to a new delight. This is our highest motivation. Here we have reached the top of the ladder. All the great truths surrounding Calvary are an appeal to this motivation. Let the evangelist apply such sin-subduing facts to the heart of every sinner. The love of Christ still moves the guilty rebel to surrender. The song writer has summarized it exactly: "How can I help but love Him, when He loved me so?" Preach often about the Cross if you would bring home the holiness and love of God with strong conviction for the sinner. The appeal of self-sacrificing love is uni-

¹⁹*Christ and the Dramas of Doubt* (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1913), p. 90.

versal. Let us use it fully and frequently. Oh, the wonder of it all!

*He wore a crown of thorns that I
Might wear a crown of glory;
He laid His heavenly splendors by
To bring me loves' sweet story;
In poverty He walked life's way,
In Olive's garden kneeled to pray;
He wore a crown of thorns that I
Might wear a crown of glory.*

—WILLIAM M. RUNYAN²⁰

*I cannot reject such a Saviour as He,
Dishonor and wound Him again.
I'll go to His feet and repent of my sin,
Be willing to suffer the pain.
I'll take up my cross, I will walk by His side,
For the pathway of duty I see;
I will follow my Lord, and abide in His heart—
The heart that was broken for me.*

—J. W. VAN DE VENTER²¹

The evangelist should seek to be used of God to precipitate a crisis in the minds of his hearers. The method of modern Communism, as we have already noted, is constantly to precipitate a crisis. It is part of *their* program of evangelism. In all evangelistic preaching there should be this great undertone of decision. At the heart of all evangelistic preaching lies this sense of urgency.

Behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2).

²⁰From "He Wore a Crown of Thorns." © The Rodeheaver Co. Used by permission.

²¹From "The Heart That Was Broken for Me." © The Rodeheaver Co. Used by permission.

"To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart" (Ps. 95: 7-8).

"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found" (Isa. 55:6).

George Sweazey reminds us rightly that: "Each postponement may make decision less likely. . . . That is why preachers sometimes prolong an invitation or repeat an invitation hymn—the struggle to decide takes time. . . . Not to decide is to decide not to. . . . The habit of indecision grows harder to break with each repetition."²²

Yet in every crisis of decision the faithful evangelist must always act with due respect for the person he seeks to win. God himself respects that sovereignty of the individual soul. He stands at the door and knocks, but there is no omnipotence in moral suasion. At best He can only say: "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live" (Isa. 55:3). Salvation is an act of laying hold on eternal life in a divine-human cooperation.

The soul-winning evangelist must drive home the solemn truth that there never can be any adequate reason for rejecting Christ and His salvation. Let him ask the sinner: "Just what good has sin ever done you? Why clasp it so tightly to your bosom that you cannot even see its ugly face?" Excuses—yes, plenty of them. But reasons—there are none valid for the act of Christ-rejection.

Here, then, is the method of soul-winning evangelism: Knowledge, plus imagination, plus aroused emotion, plus intense motivation—that by all means we may persuade some, yea, many! And hence the need for doctrinal information, vivid and valid illustration, plus direct and personal application, followed by a loving appeal to action. Inform the intellect! Arouse the emotions! Moti-

²²*Effective Evangelism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1953), p. 137.

vate the will! And have faith that God will speak and
that sinners will respond!

*Some wish to live within the sound
Of church or chapel bell;
I want to run a rescue shop
Within one yard of hell.*

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

*I'll preach as though I ne'er shall preach again,
And as a dying man to dying men.*

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

*Our fathers to their graves have gone;
Their strife is past,—their triumph won;
But sterner trials wait the race
Which rises in their honored place,—
A moral warfare with the crime
And folly of an evil time.*

*So Let it be in God's own might
We gird us for the coming fight,
And strong in Him Whose cause is ours
In conflict with unholy powers,
We grasp the weapons he has given,—
The Light, and Truth, and Love of Heaven.*

—JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

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