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Basic Considerations in Understanding the Goal Of Faith in the Sermons of John Donne

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BASIC CONSIDERATIONS IN UNDERSTANDING
THE GOAL OF FAITH IN THE SERMONS
OF JOHN DONNE

A Research Paper Presented to the
Faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Practical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity

by

Carlton Lester Riemer

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THE FAITH GOAL IN JOHN DONNE'S SERMONS;

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study comprises an examination of a specific aspect of the art of preaching and a particular preacher who practiced the art of preaching with an unusual amount of success. The preacher is John Donne, an Anglican homiletician of the 17th Century. He was chosen as a valid object for study in the general field of homiletics because his sermons are receiving renewed attention and analysis in the 20th Century. Contemporary homileticians and theologians are able to study Donne's sermons because all of his 160 extant sermons have been published in a ten volume edition prepared by George R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson.¹

The specific aspect of the art of preaching involved in this study is the kind of goal which Donne held before himself in a number of his sermons. It is the factor of preaching to the goal of faith. Richard R. Caemmerer, professor of homiletics at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, and author of the book, Preaching for the Church, distinguishes the goal of faith from the goals of life, Church, family, hope, and prayer and devotes a Chapter to a consideration of each.²

A "faith goal" type of sermon can be defined as a public discourse which has the primary aim of bringing non-Christians to an acceptance of Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. This type of sermon contrasts to the type of sermon which has

the goal of feeding and nourishing the spiritual life of Christians who have already accepted Jesus Christ through faith. The "faith goal" type of sermon, therefore, because it makes an appeal to the nonbelievers in the audience, is an instrument in the mission outreach of the Church.

That Donne was concerned about the Church's mission obligation over against non-Christians in other lands is demonstrated by Itrat Husain, an Indian student who traced the mystical strain in John Donne's theology.

Donne emphasized the need of conversion and preaching of the Gospel among those nations which had never heard of Christ. His sermon preached to the Honourable Company of the Virginian Plantation (1622) has been claimed to be the first missionary sermon ever preached in England. He said that the real glory of the colonization of Virginia would consist in preaching the Gospel to the heathen there. "Preach to them Doctrinally, preach to them Practically; Enamour them with your Justice, and (as farre as may consist with your security) your civilitie; but inflame them with your godliness, and your Religion. Bring them to love and Reverence the name of that King, that sends men to teach them the wayes of Civilitie in this world, but to feare and adore the Name of that King of Kings, that sends men to teach them the waies of Religion, for the next world."³

Thus Donne holds a significant place in the history of the Church's missionary activity. The passage cited above demonstrates that John Donne shared his personal missionary vision with the laity and tried to motivate the members of his congregation to face the challenge of mission work. All Christians, as Donne implied, bear the responsibility of bringing the Gospel to nonbelievers by witnessing to their life in Christ with the totality of their being wherever they are. The

preacher, however, has the additional responsibility and opportunity to witness to non-Christians by publicly proclaiming the Word of God. The preacher who devotes himself to this task is automatically involved in structuring his sermons toward a "faith goal."

Making the distinction between a "faith goal" and a "life goal" does not imply that there is no unifying factor as far as goals in preaching are concerned. Faith and life are admittedly related and closely connected in the total response of man to God. Members of the Christian community need to be brought back to faith constantly. Conversion is an on-going, continuous process, for it is always possible for a believer to fall away from the Christian faith.

When the nature of faith and unbelief is thus understood, it is possible to say that ultimately preaching has only one goal. After asking the question of what difference there is in preaching to believers and nonbelievers, Caemmerer concludes that actually all goals of preaching can be subsumed under an all-inclusive goal.

What is the chief difference between the sermon in the worship of Christians and the one directed to nonmembers?

The goals of preaching are the same--that they should believe on Jesus Christ and love their brother. The malady of sin is the same. True, in the believing Christian it is sin which because of remnants of the flesh continues to attack the life of God in him (cf. Rom. 7:15-25; I John 1:8-10). In the man without Christ there are not simply remnants, for he is as yet unchanged by the Spirit. Yet in both the new and the old man sin and flesh are the

same. Certainly the Gospel of the redeeming work of Jesus Christ and of God's forgiveness of sin and gift of new life through the Spirit is the same to both. Hence the parish pastor can preach helpfully to a visitor who is not a church member or to the community in a broadcast service while he is addressing his own flock.⁴

According to William R. Mueller, author of the most recent and most extensive study of John Donne as a preacher, this single goal characterizes Donne's sermons.

It has been said that all Donne's many sermons are in fact one sermon. This is true if it means that Donne's one subject is the Christian Faith; but because the Faith itself is living and deep-rooted in the necessities of man's nature, it can be expressed in a thousand different ways.⁵

While it is true that all preaching has to do with faith, yet, in spite of the fact that the goal of all preaching can be related to the one goal of faith, there are some special concerns which present themselves for consideration when a preacher actually devotes himself to the specific task of using his preaching as a means for making a missionary appeal to nonbelievers who may perchance be listening to and evaluating what he has to say. These special concerns will shape the form of the sermon and give it distinctive characteristics.

One of the characteristics of a sermon directed toward a "faith goal" has to do with the way in which the problem of universal human sin is handled. Caemmerer explains,

Particularly in the area of the hearer's malady and need the preacher has the opportunity to shape his message to non-Christians in a distinctive way. He will be most painstaking in exploring the surface symptoms without becoming maudlin or harrowing. This factor of approach makes evangelistic preaching and

particularly radio address difficult, and it makes the common touch and the manifest concern of the preacher essential.⁶

Hence the preacher deals with sin as a fact. But the fact of sin is revealed to man by God in Holy Scripture, and an awareness of sin and a conviction of sin comes from personal experience. The nonbeliever may reject the preacher's explanation of man's basic malady by arguing that divine revelation and subjective personal experiences--especially the subjective personal experiences of a preacher--do not scientifically prove the fact of sin. The preacher must answer this argument, which is more often thought than verbally expressed by the nonbeliever, by demonstrating repeatedly that the doctrine of sin is not an unfounded and unwarranted a priori but actually expresses a reality which is common to all men.

Thus it becomes apparent that the preacher's doctrine of sin influences the "faith goal" of his sermon. A personal concept of sin will ultimately and significantly affect the approach used to speak to nonbelievers. Before the Gospel can be communicated to a nonbeliever, the communicator of the Gospel, in this case, the preacher, must be personally convinced of the fact that he is a sinner. Once he is thus personally convinced, he is able to bring the nonbeliever to a similar conviction. He is then personally equipped to cause the nonbeliever to be personally convinced of the fact that he too is a sinner. Unless this takes place, the Gospel concerning Jesus Christ, the Savior of sinners, will have no meaning.

John Donne's personal experience resulted in a doctrine of sin which realistically expressed the true nature of the human condition. Once he had this personal awareness of sin, he felt compelled to convince his hearers that they too were sinners. He realized the difficulty of this task, because he knew, also from personal experience, that man is so fallen that he will not readily permit himself to become convinced of the fact that he is indeed a sinner. Because this matter is preliminary to a consideration of the "faith goal," the doctrine of sin as Donne conceived of it in personal, universal, and specific terms will be considered in the second chapter of this paper.

Another aspect of preaching which has bearing on communicating the Gospel to nonbelievers is the basic matter of the mode of speech which the preacher uses to express his doctrinal convictions. Caemmerer stresses the importance of this consideration.

Nevertheless when we think of the man outside the church, some special problems become evident. The regular worshipper has acquired a language of religious terms which the man outside the church does not possess, for the former is familiar with the Bible and handbooks of religious instruction and the practices of worship. To the non-Christian much of the Biblical mode of speech, Biblical stories and illustrations, and the terms employed in the church's worship, are unintelligible. This means that they are liable to be not merely blanks as he hears them but irritants. To him standard and central terms of Christian preaching, such as faith, unbelief, life, death, God's wrath, God's grace, love, peace, are likely to mean something quite different from the Biblical intention. The more technical terms, such as righteousness and justification, holiness and sanctification, church, world, flesh, spirit, may be utterly bewildering.⁷

A non-Biblical mode of speech must, therefore, be developed and used by the preacher if he hopes to communicate the doctrine of sin specifically to nonbelievers. Joseph Sittler, editor of a collection of collegiate sermons, emphasizes the same point by demonstrating how this principle has a significant influence on the sermon preached in the context of a campus, where the mission approach must be directed to a highly critical and intellectually audience composed of nonbelievers and believers.

For a congregation thus constituted the sermon must be prepared with certain facts commandingly in mind. The terms, episodes, great operational ideas of the biblical God and the biblical world must not be assumed. This substance is in large part either only faintly known or badly eroded. One dare not presuppose that the term redemption rings a bell, that David or Isaiah are known figures, or even that the parables of Jesus are part of the memory--furnishings of the mind of the student.

From this statement it becomes apparent that unfounded assumptions concerning language may be highly dangerous to the communication of the Gospel to nonbelievers. Failure on the part of preachers to understand the importance of choosing words which carry the intended meaning of the Holy Bible to the hearer may result in a serious misunderstanding of the message of the Bible.

Sittler analyzes the importance of the preacher's mode of speech still further.

The biblical study of grace and man and the world is couched in a language, uses images and figures, and relates its power in episodes and discourses which presuppose a "religious" culture for an understanding

of its message and intention. But this religious culture, along with ways of apprehending meaning intrinsic to it, is either gone or so deeply eroded that preaching based upon the supposition that it is still alive is either a celebrative monologue out of the past or simply annoying (sic.) to the student generation. To preach as if that were not so is a kind of faithful disobedience. Faithful, because one intends to declare the gospel of the grace of God; but disobedient, because one permits the offence of the gospel to be at the wrong place--in the form of the utterance instead of the disclosed substance of the utterance.⁹

The task of the preacher then is to convey the meaning of the terms used in the Bible. As a result, it may be necessary for him to consciously avoid using the terms of the Bible when the sermon is directed to a "faith goal."

The mode of speech which Donne used in his sermons to bring his hearers to a conviction of sin will be considered in the third chapter. Here special attention will be given to those images and illustrations of sin and its effects which Donne employed to explain the malady which is common to all men. The fact that the images and illustrations used are in a non-biblical mode of speech will also be considered.

Chapter four will deal with Donne's understanding of the process of salvation. Mueller summarizes Donne's doctrine of the Means of Grace as follows:

He [Donne] points out that the Holy Ghost often makes clear the power of God through the mouth of the preacher (D V:69),¹⁰ and he once told his congregation at St. Paul's that "The men from whom we are to receive testimony of the sense of the Scriptures, must be men that have witnesses, that is, a visible and outward calling in the Church of God" (D IV:218). He expresses the same sentiment in other ways: "The Scriptures are Gods Voyce; The Church is his Echo"

(D VI:223); the meaning of Scripture must be seen through "the eye of the Church" (D III:210). These remarks show the mutual interdependence of priest, Church, Scripture, and sermon; all work together as co-operating instruments for the salvation of mankind. The priest gains his knowledge of the redemptive way through Scripture; and his sermon, delivered in the Church, is the means of communicating this saving knowledge.¹¹

This quotation reflects the kind of balance Donne achieved in his theology between an interest in human sin and an interest in the whole apparatus ordained by God for calling men to salvation.

Similar to Chapter II, Donne's understanding of salvation will be organized in the categories of personal, universal, and specific salvation in Chapter IV.

In like manner, Chapter V will be similar to Chapter III in that the mode of speech used by Donne to communicate his doctrine of salvation will be discussed.

Chapter VI, entitled "Concluding Considerations," will finally expand on some of the concerns which have already been introduced in this preliminary chapter. Additional concerns will be voiced, and some questions which result from this study will be raised.

CHAPTER II

DONNE'S DOCTRINE OF SIN

Personal Sin

Donne's doctrine of sin derives from his own personal experience. In his consideration of the doctrine of sin, he begins with himself and from this point moves to a consideration of sin as the condition of all men. He moves from the personally specific to the universally general.

The intensity of Donne's understanding of sin in his own personal life affected primarily the tone of his sermons, as Simpson is quick to point out.

It is this note of intense personal religious experience which gives to the sermons their unique power. Behind their eloquence and elaborate rhetoric we hear the voice of a human soul, tortured at times by remorse for past sins, agonizing with his hearers to rescue them from temptations of which he knows the awful power, but inspired also by a great hope and a great devotion. . . . Donne never glosses over the sinfulness of his past life, but in the fact that God has had mercy on his own soul, he sees encouragement and hope for the most despairing of his hearers.¹

At certain stages in his preaching ministry this note of personal awareness of sin is more apparent than at others. It is an outstanding characteristic of those sermons which Donne preached at Lincoln's Inn, a parish composed primarily of law students. Donne served here as a 17th Century counterpart of a campus pastor from October, 1616, to February, 1622. Commenting on these sermons, Simpson observes that

There are personal touches in them [Lincoln's Inn sermons] which are absent from the more elaborate discourses which he afterwards delivered at St. Paul's and Whitehall, and there is never the slightest attempt to place himself on a pedestal apart from his audience. He speaks of sin as a thing of which he himself has known the bondage, and can still feel at times the attraction, though he loathes it now from the bottom of his heart. The world, the flesh, and the devil have had as much power over him as over any of his hearers. He has known ambition, pride, hatred, lust as well as they. He is no cloistered recluse who has lived apart from his fellows-- he is a man who has sinned and suffered and struggled, who has groped his way through darkness and the shadow of death, till at last the day-spring from on high has visited him, to guide his feet into the way of peace.²

Such an understanding of sin results from a great amount of introspection and self-examination. Donne's personality possessed such qualities, and, according to Edmund Fuller in his introduction to selected sermons of John Donne, hearers of Donne's sermons sensed these personality qualities.

. . . there was in Donne a fascinating complex of the worldly and the devout, the sensual and the spiritual. His candid searching within himself, as every artist must do, for the understanding of human sin, is one of the qualities that drew people to hear him preach and that draw us still to all that he wrote.³

Environmental factors also had a bearing upon Donne's doctrine of sin. Here are described some of the psychological and sociological background which shaped and determined the degree of importance which Donne gave to this matter:

Donne came to the pulpit from the secular world, and from years of bitterness, disillusion, self-criticism, and even self-torture. From the beginning of his ministry he was completely and painfully aware of the power of sin and the necessity of warning and exhorting people against it.⁴

Thus Donne's sermons reflect a profound personal awareness of sin.

Universal Sin

Donne's concept of sin, however, went beyond a mere understanding and awareness of sin in himself. His personal awareness of sin took on the dimension of a sincere desire to communicate this dreadful awareness of sin to others. Mueller considers this one of the prerequisites of a great preacher, and he demonstrates that in this respect Donne can serve as an exemplary model.

If one prerequisite of great preaching is that the preacher have a conviction of sin, another is that he be able to bring his more complacent parishioners to a like conviction. This Donne sought to do in a variety of ways. In two of his earliest sermons he directs himself specifically to the task of warning those people who, not having felt the wrath of God, persist in their sins under the assumption that they will go unpunished.⁵

Personal considerations did, therefore, result in a consideration of the condition of others.

Being himself convinced of the fact that he was a sinner, Donne then made it his task as a minister to bring others to a similar conviction of their sins. Mueller demonstrates that Donne held the view that it is vitally important for all men to come to a conviction of their general sinful condition.

All men are, nonetheless, mired in sin and must become convinced of that fact. Such a conviction is the first step in the journey toward redemption, is "our quickning in our regeneration, and second birth" (D IX:299).⁶

This consciousness of sin on the part of the hearer is of primary importance in the whole process of salvation. Without this there can be no salvation, and any communication of the Gospel of salvation and forgiveness through Christ is impossible. Husain shows that Donne was aware of the impossibility of conversion without a sincere consciousness of sin.

To Donne the first sign of conversion is the consciousness of sin and the realization of the need of repentance and purification. . . . After this "sinful condition" has been realized, the need of repentance becomes an urgent necessity; and this process of purgation is a long and painful one.⁷

The necessity of a consciousness of sin is a prominent element in Donne's theology.

Therefore Donne often pursued this thought further and logically explained some of its ramifications and implications. Donne seems to have reasoned that if an awareness of sin is essential to conversion, then an unawareness of sin is a most serious matter. On the basis of one of Donne's earliest extant sermons, Mueller explains the implications which Donne saw for a sinner who was not disposed to admit his need for conversion.

The most dangerous condition in which a sinner may find himself is happiness, a condition which suggests his unawareness of sin or of its damning consequences; satisfied with things as they are, thoughtless of the terrible destiny which awaits him unless he repents, he becomes hardened in sin. Perhaps worst of all, the sinner is led by God's very patience, by God's indisposition to strike quickly--the sinner is led by these merciful qualities to continue in sin.⁸

Because Donne understood how easy it is for a sinner to pervert the gracious activity of God into an excuse for sinning, he was

able to warn his parishioners that if they persist in sin, they can eventually create a situation in which they themselves make it impossible for God to save them.

Specific Sins

Donne's understanding of sin as the common condition of all men did not remain in the realm of general theological abstractions. Simpson notes that a relationship exists between Donne's personal experience and the experience of all men with reference to specific sins.

He [Donne] denounced, with a bitterness born of his own experience, the ruin wrought in the soul by specific sins such as lust, pride, or worldly ambition, but though he condemned the sins, he showed a profound sympathy with the sinner. The sins which moved his contempt most were those of the selfish indolent man, who goes through life unmoved by the sufferings of others, untouched by any noble purpose, wasting his time in sloth or idle amusement, and leaves the world without having accomplished any useful work to justify his existence. The sin of 'the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin' was to Donne more heinous than any single crime committed in the heat of passion under sudden temptation, for it was the symptom of alienation from the life of God, which is endless creative activity.⁹

Donne seems to have prepared this list of specific sins for the benefit primarily of those members of his congregation who needed to be brought back to faith.

But Donne also prepared lists of specific sins for the benefit of those hearers who needed to be brought to faith. Referring to Sermon Number thirteen in Volume nine of their edition of Donne's sermons, Potter and Simpson observe that

This sermon [Number thirteen, Volume nine] is more definite and practical in its advice than most of the others. And psychologically Donne's advice is extremely sound. The first step, so he says, is to recognize that we are sinners, and not merely "miserable sinners" (as the Prayer Book says) in general, but sinners of a very particular kind. We are usurers or thieves or liars or adulterers, though we like to gloss over this unpleasant fact by describing ourselves as men of the world or sound financiers or society women. We thrust our mean and dirty actions into the back of our mind, we try to forget them, and partially succeed, and then deep down in our subconsciousness they fester and destroy us. It is only the grace of God which enables us first to drag up their hateful memory, and then to confess them openly.¹⁰

It is, therefore, apparent that Donne, with a doctrine of personal and universal sin as the basis, moved very quickly to an emphasis on the specific nature of sin as it shows itself in the lives of all men, believers and nonbelievers alike.

It has been indicated in this study that Donne's thoughts on the subject of sin moved from personal, through universal, and finally to specific considerations. An understanding of the essential needs of his hearers conditioned the way in which he endeavored to communicate to their basic needs. Precisely how it is that Donne actually did this communicating remains to be evaluated in the following chapter.

CHAPTER III

THE MODE OF SPEECH USED BY DONNE TO DESCRIBE SIN

The doctrinal considerations discussed in the previous section had an effect upon the mode of speech which Donne employed in speaking about sin in his sermons. Because Donne took his calling and responsibilities as a preacher with the utmost seriousness, he was more concerned with implementing his theology of sin than he was concerned with merely formulating a theology about sin. Mueller traces the effect of Donne's concern on his attitude toward what a sermon is or should be.

The sermon should be neither too complex for the understanding of the congregation's least perceptive mind nor too banal for the patience and attention of its most active intellect (D IX:215). At the same time, individual members of a congregation must not be too restive or uncharitable if the sermon seems not quite at their proper level of understanding; if the minister preaches "in the mountaine," the plain dweller must not be offended, and if he preaches "on the plaine," the mountain dweller must not think himself superior to the sermon (D VII:330-331). Perhaps most importantly, the preacher should know his congregation well enough to rouse his parishioners to a conviction of their particular sins, and yet he must, in pronouncing the Lord's judgments on sin, season his pronouncement with an equal emphasis on God's merciful and forgiving nature (D III:363-365).¹

Mueller emphasizes this relationship between doctrine and action by suggesting the type of effect Donne's doctrine had on his hearers when careful attention was given to the mode of speech.

It would require an obdurate heart and a closed ear to remain unmoved by Donne's discourses on sin. If a man were, without benefit of sermon, too insensitive

or too obtuse to recognize himself as one of the fallen, certainly Donne's analysis of sin should enable him to recognize its presence within himself, and certainly Donne's description of the status and destiny of the sinner should lead him to recognize his frightful predicament.²

Donne's personal awareness of sin, therefore, aided him in communicating an awareness of sin to others.

But it can not be said that Donne always used a mode of speech that would communicate both to nonbelievers and believers. Potter and Simpson analyze Donne's style with reference to his vocabulary and show the importance of vocabulary in the whole process of communication.

The vocabulary used by Donne in the sermons is much larger than employed in his poems. It includes such words as agnomination, binominous, colluctation, commonefaction, conculcation, consubstantiality, inchoation, inintelligibleness, innotescence, longanimity, lycanthropy, macilency, significative, supergression, superplusage, and the like, as well as theological terms like the hypostatical union of two natures in Christ, the impassibility of the Divine Nature, or the impenitableness of those who sin against the Holy Ghost. However useful such words may be in theological controversy, they do little to increase the effectiveness of Donne's style. As soon as he is moved by a strong emotion, they drop out of his speech, which returns to the native idiom that he could use so well.³

Hence Donne's vocabulary at times hindered him from communicating an awareness of sin to others.

But Potter and Simpson also state that when Donne devoted more attention to the goal of faith in his preaching, the style changed to accommodate the needs of his hearers.

The open-air sermons preached at the Cross were intended to reach the multitude, and Donne preached more simply and plainly than was his wont. . . .

Donne deals with the different classes of men who found a stumbling-block in Christ's life and doctrine. There were the learned, the philosophers, who thought Christianity foolishness; there were the proud, who thought it too humble a religion, "an inglorious, a contemptible Religion . . . and a sooty, and Melancholique Religion"; and there were the ascetics, who exceeded Christ's disciples in outward austerity of life. All these classes of men still remain, and Donne has a thrust in particular at those who claim a superior purity and austerity of their own.⁴

Mueller elaborates on this matter of style still more. He compares Donne's style with that of Seneca and contrasts it with that of Cicero. Ciceronian style is considered less effective homiletically, because it involves more subordinate clauses and more connectives between main clauses. On the other hand,

One effect of Senecanism is to quicken the pace or, at least, to give the impression of quickening, a fact which in turn heightens the dramatic quality. And so we see that Donne's passage moves quickly from its first ague to everlasting hell-fire; his Lincoln's Inn congregation must have been frighteningly disconcerted by the rapidity with which damnation may overtake a human being.⁵

Sentence structure, another very important aspect of style, is treated by Mueller in this way with reference to Donne:

A great part of the beauty of his prose stems from his acute sensitivity to sentence structure, a kind of architectonic in which he knows just how far to go with parallel constructions without allowing them to become monotonous, and knows exactly what devices to use to prevent a rhythm too regular and a pace too unvaried. A good example of such is found in his description of the terrors of a man who is spiritually ill: "Every fit of an Ague is an Earth-quake that swallows him, every fainting of the knee, is a step to Hell; every lying down at night is a funerall; and every quaking is a rising to judgment; every bell that distinguishes times, is a passing-bell, and every passing-bell, his own; every singing in the ear, is an Angels Trumpet; at every dimnesse of the candle,

he heares that voice, Fool, this night they will fetch away thy soul; and in every judgement denounced against sin, he heares an ito maledicte upon himselfe, Goe thou accursed into hell fire" (D II:84).⁶

Such a detailed analysis of certain specific passages from Donne's sermons is typical of much of the critical work that is being done by students of Donne's literary ability.

Technical considerations of Donne's style can also be balanced with the imaginative way in which Donne used them. Without imaginative, colorful, and meaningful images his style would not be nearly so impressive, even though it may be technically perfect and above criticism. Potter and Simpson quote Donne at length in order to illustrate the vividness with which Donne can describe the sinner's condition.

Donne describes the death of the wicked rich man:
 "The substance of the ungodly shall be dried up like a river; and they shall make a sound like a thunder, in rain. It shall perish, and it shall be in Parabolam, it shall be the wonder, and the discourse of the time. . . . he shall hear, or he shall whisper to himself that voice: O fool, This night they will fetch away thy soul; he must go under the imputation of a fool, where the wisdome of this generation, (which was all the wisdome he had) will do him no good; he must go like a fool. His soul must be fetch'd away; he hath not his In manus tuas, his willing surrender of his Soul ready; It must be fetch'd in the night of ignorance, when he knows not his own spiritual state; It must be fetch'd in the night of darkness, in the night of solitude, no sence of the assistance of the communion of Saints in the Triumphant, nor in the Militant Church; in the night of disconsolatenes, no comfort in that seal, Absolution, . . . and it must be fetch'd this night, the night is already upon him, before he thought of it."⁷

Such use of description requires a certain amount of willingness and ability on the part of the congregation to put itself

imaginately into the situation which Donne describes. When many of the hearers are uncultured and untrained in this kind of mental exercise, Donne, according to Potter and Simpson, soon learned from experience that imagery, among other stylistic techniques, often proves helpful where mere description does not succeed.

Being sensitive to the response of his hearers, however, he soon discovered that a successful preacher must do more than make his congregation think, and that the feelings of most people are best moved by means other than those depending upon logical analysis. More and more, as his preaching continued, he combined ingenuity, paradox, and the logical balancing of ideas, and epigrammatic statement, with the hypnotic power of rhetoric, the music of word-sounds, the emotional appeal of beautiful imagery (there is, surprisingly, far more obviously beautiful imagery in his sermons than one ever finds in his verse), and the dramatic rather than purely logical juxtaposition and balance of opposites.⁸

From this it can be concluded that imagery contributes to the emotional appeal which a sermon has to nonbelievers.

A detailed examination of the images Donne used to clarify his thought for the benefit of his hearers reveals that some of his images are surprising, if not even shocking. The reason for this, as Potter and Simpson explain, is because Donne felt that no comparison was too high or too low for him to use, if by it he might reach the understanding of some poor soul.

There are a certain number of images in Donne's sermons which give us a shock of surprise of a different kind. There is a incongruity about metaphors taken from the theater or the gaminghouse, used as they are by Donne to illustrate some profound truth of religion; it is the converse of his use in the poems of some image drawn from theology or metaphysics in the service of profane love. We feel a shock of surprise at

the sight of these unequally yoked pairs. The discovery of occult resemblances between things apparently unlike was singled out by Dr. Johnson as one of the distinctive marks of the wit of Donne and his followers. When the things coupled are sacred and secular, a suggestion of profanity arises. In the love poems Donne is sometimes deliberately profane, and it may be that in the divine poems and the sermons he occasionally uses incongruous secular metaphors with the contrary intention of reclaiming that which had been polluted for the service of the sanctuary.⁹

In order to better understand Donne's imagery, Simpson suggests that an understanding of the philosophical background of Donne's attitude might be helpful.

The breakdown of the medieval system of thought is closely connected with the sudden outburst of 'metaphysical' conceits in the poetry of Donne and his followers. . . . these conceits are found in Donne's best prose as well as in his poetry. . . . This habit of mind, so alien from the ordered thinking of the eighteenth century, was natural to Donne, to whom anything in heaven or earth could be used to illustrate anything else. The reader of the sermons is constantly surprised by some brilliant comparison which seems at first merely fanciful, but on examination proves to be really illuminating. Donne had the poet's eyes, which can discern a world of meaning in the most apparently trivial object, and he rejected the hackneyed comparisons of professional writers in favour of a new set of images, coined in the mint of his own powerful imagination.¹⁰

Philosophically, Donne operated with the concept that the reality behind life is one.

To illustrate Donne's attitude toward imagery and his skillful use of it, Mueller quotes several passages from Donne and analyzes each of them at length.¹¹ Four of the more unusual ones appear below to give a general impression of the wide range of human experience from which Donne draws his

imagery.

The man encompassed by sins resembles a man under water: the former finds it as difficult to recover from his spiritual sickness as the latter to rise above the destructive waters. The man under water is in serious condition because he "hath no aire to see by, no aire to hear by, he hath nothing to reach to, he touches not ground, to push him up, he feels no bough to pull him up . . ." (D II:96).¹²

The burden of sin sinks a man, wearies him, slows him down, and causes him to stumble (D II:132-136); of all God's creatures sinful man is most miserable: "Miserable man! a Toad is a bag of Poyson, and a Spider is a blister of Poyson, and yet a Toad and a Spider cannot poyson themselves; Man hath a dram of poyson, originall-Sin, in an invisible corner, we know not where, and he cannot choose but poyson himselfe and all his actions with that" (D I:293). And how does a man know when the poison has won its victory and placed him beyond cure? It is not simply when man dwells pleasurably on the titillating memory of his sins; it is not when he succumbs for a time to temptation; it is not when the devil works successfully to lead man astray. Rather it is when man had made sin so habitual, when his heart is so wholly set upon evil, that sin is self-generating, no longer needing the devil's crafty motivation, no longer needing any outer temptation. A man so conquered by sin, so independent of the stimulation of temptation, would be ambitious in a hospital, licentious in a wilderness, voluptuous in a famine! (D I:178-179)¹³

And on another occasion a medical image describes the human condition. When the human heart receives a wound it is incurable, since its perpetual motion and constant beating prevent the physician from working upon it. So it is with the spiritual heart "fully set to do evil"; so unsettled is its condition, so brisk is the motion of its sinful activity, so extensive is the presence of sin, that there is simply "no room for a Cure." (D I:179-180)¹⁴

At another time Donne uses a commercial image to clarify the sinful nature of man's estate. Through Adam's fall, all mankind was sold to the devil; through the shedding of Christ's blood, mankind was redeemed. But man through his actual, day-to-day sins has sold himself to Satan once again, a fact

which Donne expresses with considerable wit: "In Adam we were sold in grosse; in our selves we are sold by retail" (D II:115).¹⁵

For Donne, therefore, no image is to be excluded as a possible aid in explaining the condition of man. He decided whether or not he should use a certain image on the basis of only one criterion. So long as the image communicated the concept of sin to his hearers and brought them to a conviction of their sin, it could be used as a sermon illustration. With this standard of judgment, Donne was able to translate the language of the Church into the language of the world. By means of his creative and imaginative inclusion of meaningful analogies from every-day experiences in the secular world, Donne managed to communicate both to believers and nonbelievers the basic truth that all men are sinful.

CHAPTER IV

DONNE'S DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

As with his doctrine of sin, so it was with Donne's doctrine of salvation. Donne was personally involved in struggling with the theological considerations of God's saving activity in relation to sinful, fallen mankind. Donne was personally convinced of his own salvation, and this conviction grew into a concern for others that they might be just as convinced about their salvation as he was about his. Accordingly this present chapter comprises an examination of Donne's concept of a preacher as one who also convinces people that God wills to save them from their sinful condition. Mueller considers this concern of Donne to be just as significant as his concern over the doctrine of sin.

Donne is following his calling as preacher by simultaneously establishing in his hearers a conviction of their sin and assuring them of God's redemptive power over the worst of sinners. In his effort to lead them to their salvation Donne also makes clear that vast difference between the state of the damned and the Kingdom to which the truly repentant can look forward.¹

Thus Donne achieved a proper balance between preaching the Law and the Gospel. His profound sense of human sin was balanced by an equally profound sense of divine love and forgiveness.

Personal Salvation

Donne's personal sense of the meaning of salvation caused him to be evangelical in his approach to those who were not yet

saved. As Logan ~~Ben~~ Smith notes, Donne did not think highly of scaring people into heaven by scaring them out of hell.

. . . so real and vivid was his sense of God and the glory of the beatific vision, that unlike other preachers of the time he felt no need to terrify his congregations with the flames and physical horrors of Hell--to his religious mind the deprivation of God's love was in itself Hell, and no fires and tortures could add to that punishment. Save, therefore, as an eternal banishment from God's presence, Donne does not speak of Hell; but the description of Heaven, the glory of Heaven, was a theme that called forth his highest powers of eloquence and impassioned imagination.²

Donne knew personally that the Law could bring a person only to a knowledge of his sin; it was not the power which would bring a person to an intimate and personal knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, when Donne exhorts others to love Christ, he uses the Gospel motivation of God's love and mercy in Jesus Christ. Potter and Simpson comment on and quote one of Donne's sermons in which this is made clear.

The words of the text furnish Donne with an analysis of the aspects under which the Son of God is to be loved, but he soon moves on to a more personal and impassioned expression of his love for the Savior who died on the cross.

Love him then, as he is presented to thee here; Love the Lord, love Christ, love Jesus. If when thou lookest upon him as the Lord, thou findest frowns and wrinkles in his face, apprehensions of him, as of a Judge, and occasions of feare, doe not run away from him, in that apprehension; look upon him in that angle, in that line awhile, and that feare shall bring thee to love; and as he is Lord, thou shalt see him in the beauty and lovelinesse of his creatures, in the order and succession of causes, and effects, and in that harmony and musique of the peace between him, and thy soule: As he is the Lord, thou wilt feare him, but no man feares God truly, but that that feare ends in love.

Love him as he is the Lord, that would have nothing perish, that he hath made; And love him as he is Christ, that hath made himselfe man too, that thou mightest not perish: Love him as the Lord that could shew mercy; and love him as Christ, who is that way of mercy, which the Lord hath chosen. Returne againe, and againe, to that mysterious person, Christ; . . .³

Mueller adds that this personal aspect of Donne's doctrine of salvation affected the manner in which he expounded a text.

An exposition of text, however, must be accompanied by a moving demonstration of the relationship of God's Word to the lives of the hopeful sinners who sit beneath the preacher. And this relationship can be well drawn only by a man who understands the human heart and who has a keen sense of God's ways of working with man and of man's response, or lack of it, to this divine activity. Donne's sense of man's nature, of the depth of his sin and of his yearning for the grace to repent, is excessively acute.⁴

In Donne's opinion then, the exegetical niceties of the professional theologian were not to take priority over the pastoral concern of the preacher.

This is not to say, however, that Donne did not take a scholarly interest in the exposition of scriptural texts,

. . . for his expositions are thorough, orderly, and possessed of a scholarship which could derive only from a most careful study of Scripture, of the writings of the Church Fathers, and of the great commentaries.⁵

Whether or not Donne pursued a matter in a scholarly manner and the degree to which he did so depended upon the bearing that this matter had upon his hearers' understanding of salvation.

Universal Salvation

The fact that Donne describes the process of salvation in

great detail for the benefit of his hearers infers that his personal doctrine of salvation was transferred into the doctrine of a salvation which is available to all men. He clearly outlined the path along which God moves the sinner from condemnation to salvation. Husain feels that Donne gave the following arrangement to his thoughts on the process of salvation:

Donne says that true repentance consists in two things; it is a rejection of sin, and a final turning towards God.

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In the state of purgation and repentance the soul has a consciousness of its gradual shedding off the sin, and at the same time it implicitly relies on divine grace to preserve it from falling into sin again.

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The first step according to Donne in the cleansing of the self is to receive sincerely the "helps," the Word and the Sacrament, which Christ has offered to the Soul in the Church.

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After receiving the full benefit of "God's grace exhibited in his ordinance" and after realizing that the "marks of his Grace are upon thee, that his spirit beares witness with thy spirit, that thy repentance hath been accepted by him," the soul should strive to attain the purity of conscience without which the process of purgation can never be completed.⁶

The tone of these and similar passages is not ponderously scholastic and intellectual.

Rather Donne inserts the note of urgency into those sermons which describe the process of salvation, because salvation is not a matter to be taken lightly. Potter and Simpson explain how Donne communicated this sense of urgency to his hearers.

After this recognition of sin there must be meditation, resolution, and the carrying of that resolution

into practice. Donne bestows a minute on the good resolutions which are never carried out: "How many thinke to come hither, when they wake, and are not ready when the houre comes? And even this mornings omission is an abridgement, or an essay of their whole lives, They thinke to repent every day, and are not ready when the bell tolls." Then he comes to the actual confession, and points out that confession must always be confession to God; whether or not it is made directly, or through a priest. In this connection Donne discusses the position of the Church of England, which enjoins a general public confession from the whole congregation, and recommends private confession to the priest for sick persons troubled in their consciences, and for those about to come to Holy Communion who are also troubled.⁷

Donne's doctrine of salvation is, therefore, more positive than negative.

Donne placed as much emphasis on the beneficial and joyful aspects of salvation as he placed on the anguish, suffering, and struggle which accompanies an awareness of sin. Potter and Simpson notice that this is prominent in Donne's Lenten sermons.

Though penitence is the main concern of these sermons, the note of joy is often heard. It is primarily the joy of forgiveness, the wonderful sense of relief from a load of guilt. This, says Donne, "is so inexpressible a comfort, to that soule that hath wrastled with the indignation of God, and is now refreshed and released, as whosoever should goe about to describe it, should diminish it; He hath it not that thinks he can utter it." Here is the unmistakable note of his own personal experience.⁸

This note of joy in Lenten sermons is unusual, since a more somber, melancholy, and introspective tone might be expected during this penitential season.

From the preceding it is evident that Donne's doctrine of salvation did not remain a completely personal matter. He was sure of his own salvation, but he was also sure that, as a

result of the atoning work of Jesus Christ, salvation is available to all men.

Specific Salvation

Because Donne understood the doctrine of salvation both in personal and universal terms, the decision that an individual man makes over against the universal grace of God was prominent in Donne's thought. Mueller makes a strong point of this,

He was forever concerned with God's ways with man, with each man, and with the wondrous possibilities of man's response to these gracious ways. He preached not of damnation and salvation in general, but of the necessity of each man's deciding, always with the possibility of God's grace, for life or for death. And he never forgot that the Christian life, in this world and the next, is one of abundant joy: . . . The contemporary preacher will find a careful reading of Donne a most beneficent tonic.⁹

Thus Donne stressed the importance of the individual decision in the Christian religion.

The decision that the individual man makes regarding God's offer of free grace also decides his attitude over against death. That there can be only two attitudes toward death is a recurring refrain in Donne's sermons. For Donne a person's attitude toward death reflected the decision which he had made over against God's offer of forgiveness. Furthermore, a great interest in, which at times almost seems to become a morbid preoccupation with, the subject of death is a unique characteristic of the content of Donne's sermons. Therefore, Mueller is quoted here at length to give sufficient attention to this subject.

Death, enemy that it is in so many ways, is to be feared only by the unrepentant, for that man must face not only the last heartbeat, not only the first death which is the portion of all mankind; he must suffer also the second death, the death which does not touch upon the resurrection but which delivers its victim to eternal damnation. The penitent man, however, has nothing to fear, for he may look well beyond the grave. Donne makes much of the glory that lies beyond, and though he is said to dwell on death and to play a morbid tune upon it, the fact is that the note of joy and hope is much more frequently heard in his sermons. He does go to great ends to impress upon man his mortality and the frailty of all earthly things, but he does so in an effort to persuade man not to place his trust in the ephemeral and untrustworthy. God is man's only sure stay and the only conqueror of death, and the man who remembers this will move toward death as a weary traveler nears some great city which is his destination. When the faithful man approaches his own sunset, when all his treasures and his loved ones are to make their final departure from him, when his own eyes grow faint and his family's tearful, then he will behold the new light of his Saviour; and though in the eyes of men he will appear but a motionless statue lying on his bed, in the eyes of God he will stand "as a Colossus, one foot in one, another in another land; one foot in the grave, but the other in heaven; one hand in the womb of the earth, and the other in Abrahams bosome: And then vere prope, Salvation is truly near . . ." (D II:267).¹⁰

This type of a contrast between the believer and the nonbeliever is a common technique used by Donne repeatedly. In reality it accomplished two tasks for him simultaneously. It served to comfort the believers, which indicates a "life goal," while at the same time it served to haunt the nonbeliever with the grim possibility that he had overlooked and neglected to consider a very important point in his spiritual life. The latter indicates a "faith goal."

The purpose of the contrast described above is the same as

the purpose of much of the preaching which is done at a campus parish in the 20th Century. Sittler suggests that the intention of proclamation and instruction in the context of the campus community

. . . is to invite the mind as well as inform it. It seeks to tease as well as to teach, to lure the mind into an awareness of the gravity of its omissions, the restricted scope of its data-for-judgment, the too small orbit of its gaze and its wonder. All men are tempted to think that they know, or know certainly what is knowable and what is not, what life may be permeable to, and what accepted ways of knowledge reject as encysted possibilities. The word of God has the task, and its preacher the duty, to awaken the suspicion that we may be wrong. A suspended chord that sets the mind wondering, the heart freshly entertaining a rejected possibility, may be right obedience in our time.¹¹

By his effective use of contrasts between believers and non-believers, John Donne seems to have done already in the 17th Century what Sittler suggests as a possibility for consideration in the 20th Century.

A final theological consideration relative to Donne's doctrine of salvation remains to be examined. It is the role of the will of man in the process of salvation. Previous considerations have already implied that Donne believed that the will of man was very much involved in the process of salvation. However, man's will makes no positive contribution. If man decides in favor of salvation, it is only through the grace of God. If man decides against the salvation offered to him, he remains in his lost condition, because his will remains in opposition to God's will. This theological consideration of the two possible

ways in which man can respond to God's gracious promptings caused Donne to desire to proclaim even more clearly just how it is that salvation comes to man. Donne's attitude and how it affected his preaching is described by Mueller:

A preacher is called, however, not only to bring fallen man to a conviction of his sin, for this alone might lead only to desperation. He is called also to proclaim God's power to redeem the penitent man. And John Donne could never be charged with leaving man in the Slough of Despond; his sense of man's depravity is more than balanced by his sense of God's redemptive love. It is true that he warns us that a persistent misuse of God's grace, a determined and stubborn insistence on pursuing evil ways, will carry man outside the bounds of salvation, not because God cannot save him but because God will save no man against his own will.¹²

Thus it is that Donne's theology of salvation was formulated and expressed in terms that complement his theology of human sin.

Donne thought of sin and grace in personal, universal, and specific terms. An understanding of his theology, which provided him with a basis for all of his activities as a preacher, is helpful in explaining how it was that Donne could effectively preach to all sorts and conditions of men simultaneously. In Chapter V this matter will be further elucidated by a consideration of the mode of speech which Donne employed to communicate his theology of salvation to believers and nonbelievers.

CHAPTER V

THE MODE OF SPEECH USED BY DONNE TO DESCRIBE SALVATION

In Chapter III it was demonstrated that Donne was a master at translating doctrinal formulations about sin into terms that even the theologically untrained could understand. He used every literary device which he could employ effectively to accomplish this task. Potter and Simpson preview some of the literary devices to demonstrate that Donne used a wide range of modes of speech to communicate his doctrine of salvation.

It [Sermon number eight in Volume two] is packed with unusual and yet pertinent comparisons and illustrations, from history, and from everyday life; especially with witty and highly individual applications to human morality and human experience, not only of the text itself but of many other passages from Scripture. Again and again Donne uses the device of paradox to bring out a point. And with all its ingenuity, the sermon is not crabbed or trivial, but rises to great eloquence--often in the long, arboriform sentences that are so characteristic of Donne's sermon style at its best--and deals essentially with the familiar and universal orthodox Christian doctrines of damnation and salvation; making those doctrines memorable (and at least to his seventeenth-century hearers and readers, palatable as well) by the flashing brilliance of his exposition and by the vividness and wit of his analogies and specific interpretations.¹

The technique Donne used is the same, but the subject matter is different.

Donne used language in much the same way that a painter uses brushes, paints, and canvass to create a picture. Most of Donne's word pictures are devoted to the subject of death, which is an aspect of human experience which disturbs believers

and nonbelievers alike. Mueller gives the following analysis of such an approach:

Donne urges each member of his congregation faithfully to carry out the duties of his particular calling, pointing out, with St. Stephen as an example, that a man's response to his calling will determine the nature of his death and of his eternity. He illustrates his contention by drawing concrete pictures of two dying men, one whose slovenly life leads to a death which is a nightmare, the other whose disciplined existence leads to the sleep of Stephen. Donne speaks directly to the first man, sketching the horror of the last moment: "To see the Blood of Christ, imputed, not to thee, but to thy Sinnes; To see Christ crucified, and not crucified for thee, but crucified by thee; To heare this blood speake, not better things, then the blood of Abel, but lowder for vengeance then the blood of Abel did" (D VIII:189) And how contrasting is the future of the man who follows the way of Stephen; that man will enter the gate and dwell in the house "where there shall be no Cloud nor Sun, no darkenesse nor dazling, but one equall light, no noyse nor silence, but one equall musick, no fears nor hopes, but one equal possession, no foes nor friends, but one equall communion and Identity, no ends nor beginnings, but one equall eternity"(D VIII:191).²

Here Donne uses a direct, conversational approach, and he heightens the effect by using vivid details.

A passage from a different sermon on the same topic of death illustrates the technique of describing a specific scene in a dramatic way. In this instance, Donne pictures an imaginary conversation between Satan and a member of the congregation who is on the verge of death. The member is described in terms which are general enough so that it could be any member of his congregation. The scene of the conversation is the deathbed. As Donne transfers his hearers to this scene, Satan is heard recalling the sins of this man in an attempt at leading

the man to despair. The member is one of the faithful, and, therefore, he asks Satan to return to the scene a minute after he has died. Then this man will answer Satan by describing to him how he is washed in the blood of Christ. Finally, the man asks Satan to confess that he is a liar.³

Analogies and metaphors are the stock-in-trade of poets. Donne was a poet in his own right long before he became a preacher. His love for using analogies and metaphors did not grow cold when he became convinced that he should enter into the preaching ministry. Rather, his imaginative, creative, and poetic ability to discover and use these poetic devices was merely transferred from verse form to prose form.

Donne's favorite analogies seem to have been the map and the circle. As Mueller notes, in some instances these two analogies were joined together in an unusual and surprising way in order to describe one aspect of the process of salvation.

Among Donne's most effective analogies to suggest the relationship between God and man are those involving a map or a circle. A flat map, on which East and West are at the greatest possible distance from each other, is like a flat soul, one which is dejected and despairing. The soul sees itself lost in the West, symbolizing death, and at the greatest distance from salvation, signified by the East or by Christ-- "The name of Christ is Oriens, The East. . . ." West can be made to touch East by pasting the map on a round body; and the soul's West can be made its East if it will but "apply . . . its trouble . . . to the body of the Gospel of Christ Jesus," and respond to its offer of salvation. (D VI:59)⁴

As noted above in Chapter III, Donne felt no compunctions about using experiences from the secular world to express spiritual

truths. Metaphors describing the sinful human condition were noted previously. Potter, Simpson, and Mueller provide the following list of metaphors which describe the nature of God's redemptive action:

Donne turns to various other secular areas to make clear by analogy the nature of God's redemptive action. He finds rich quarry, for example, in agricultural imagery. In discussing Christ's love for man, Donne writes that the Lord "loves us most for our improvement, when by his ploughing up of our hearts, and the dew of his grace, and the seed of his word, we come to give a greater rent, in the fruites of sanctification than before" (D I:241).⁵

Or Donne goes to the poultry yard for a metaphor: "All egges are not hatched that the hen sits upon; neither could Christ himselfe get all the chickens that were hatched, to come, and to stay under his wings."⁶

Marine imagery also illustrates God's redeeming action. True it is, Donne writes, that Christ alone could still a tempest, but man can at the least ride out a storm if he will anchor his confidence in God's being: (D III:185).⁷

And speaking of the Kingdom of God within the human being, he asserts that it is "planted in your election; wated in your Baptisme; fatned with the blood of Christ Jesus, ploughed up with many calamities, and tribulations; weeded with often repentances of particular sins . . ." (D II:337).⁸

This brief consideration of the literary quality of Donne's sermons indicates that, like the literary devices used to describe the sinful human condition, the literary devices used to describe the process of salvation address a basic need common to all men. Since Donne's mode of speech is essentially non-Biblical, both the believer and the nonbeliever were able to understand what he was saying. By implementing his theology of salvation with the tools of communication which were at his

disposal and by developing them to the best of his ability, John Donne avoided putting the offence of the Gospel in the form of his utterance rather than in the uttered Gospel itself.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUDING CONSIDERATIONS

A "faith goal," it has been concluded at several junctures throughout this study, has to do with one of the basic themes of the Christian faith. Every preacher, therefore, in the Christian Church, since he is a spokesman for the Church, will be constantly concerned with the goal of faith in his sermons. The observation made by churchmen, themselves that the Church is not holding its own ground in its constant opposition to materialism and secularism in America especially, and the further observation that the Church is being forced to retreat in the face of the revival of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Hinduism in the whole world generally raises the question as to whether or not preachers in America and missionaries in foreign lands truly understand what a "faith goal" is, and how absolutely necessary it is in the communication of the Gospel. Indeed, some writers are suggesting that the Christian Church is losing ground today in the face of "a world come of age," specifically because the Church's spokesmen have forsaken the task of preaching to the goal of faith. They say that the pastors' concern for maintaining the Church in effect as one of many social institutions has led preachers to concentrate an inordinate amount of time and energy on "life goals."

Others suggest that the cause of the problem may not lie here at all, that it goes back to a still more basic consideration.

A preacher can not begin to speak to a "faith goal" until he himself is able to imaginatively sympathize with and understand the basic needs of people. It is possible, therefore, that preachers are not being trained to this end, or else preachers are not building on the basic training they have received. Students of the problem suggest, therefore, that an intensive study of and saturation in the liberal arts might be helpful to give a preacher an understanding of human needs, since these are themes handled time and time again by poets, novelists, dramatists, painters, and artists of all sorts. A further study of John Donne, therefore, which seeks to correlate his knowledge of the liberal arts and his ability to communicate the Gospel to nonbelievers might be considered.

It is possible to study the goal of faith in the sermons of any preacher. The sermons of a popular contemporary preacher like Dr. Oswald C. Hoffmann, Helmut Thielicke, or Billy Graham might be studied from this point of view. Even more revealing might be a study of the sermons contained in the Old and/or New Testaments, especially the sermons of St. Peter or Paul in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles. The sermons of our Lord, as they are recorded in the gospels, might prove to be the most revealing and rewarding study of all.

Finally, mention should be made of those special ministries or those special situations in which a very careful consideration of the "faith goal" is vital. The foreign missionary has already been mentioned, since he is constantly working at

translating the Gospel out of his own personal thought forms and patterns into the thought forms and patterns of the people he hopes to serve with the message of the Gospel. This, of course, assumes that at some point in his work, the missionary will conclude that a sermon is a valid form for communicating the Gospel to particular people in a particular place at a particular time.

A final consideration involves any preacher who uses the mass media of communication, such as television, radio, and the printed page. Where the worship services of a parish are broadcast over the radio or even telecast into the community, the pastor of that parish can not help but be concerned with a "faith goal" in his sermons. Generally, such broadcasts are made from parishes which are large--or at least large enough to afford the cost of such a broadcast. This situation tends to increase the problem even more, because this means that, besides the radio audience which needs "faith goal" material, there are even more individuals present in the church building, each of whom has specific needs and concerns, which require "life goal" material.

In sum, a specific understanding of Donne's doctrines of sin and salvation and an understanding of the way in which he implemented his theology can serve as a most beneficial catalyst in the understanding of the goal of faith in sermons in general.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter I

¹John Donne, The Sermons of John Donne, edited by George R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1953-1962), 10 vols. The editors of these volumes have prepared extensive introductory remarks in which each sermon is evaluated theologically, textually, and historically. They also examine the sermons from a literary point of view.

²Richard R. Caemmerer, Preaching for the Church (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), pp. 177-214.

³Itrat Husain, The Dogmatic and Mystical Theology of John Donne (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1938), p. 41.

⁴Caemmerer, p. 62.

⁵William R. Mueller, John Donne: Preacher (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1962), pp. 4-5.

⁶Caemmerer, p. 63.

⁷Ibid., p. 62.

⁸Joseph Sittler, The Care of the Earth (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), p. 3.

⁹Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁰Quotations from the sermons of John Donne in this paper are as they appeared in the book from which they were taken.

¹¹Mueller, pp. 82-83.

Chapter II

¹John Donne, John Donne's Sermons on the Psalms and Gospels, edited by Evelyn M. Simpson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963), p. 3.

²Evelyn M. Simpson, A Study of the Prose Works of John Donne (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1948), p. 35.

³John Donne, The Showing Forth of Christ, edited by Edmund Fuller (New York, Evanston, and London: Harper & Row, 1964), pp. xi-xii.

⁴John Donne, The Sermons of John Donne, edited by George R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1953), I, 120.

⁵William R. Mueller, John Donne: Preacher (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1962), p. 169.

⁶Ibid., p. 173.

⁷Itrat Husain, The Dogmatic and Mystical Theology of John Donne (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1938), p. 127.

⁸Mueller, pp. 169-170.

⁹Simpson, p. 78.

¹⁰John Donne, The Sermons of John Donne, edited by George R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1958), IX, 39.

Chapter III

¹William R. Mueller, John Donne: Preacher (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1962), p. 80.

²Ibid., pp. 171-172.

³John Donne, The Sermons of John Donne, edited by George R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1953), I, 90.

⁴John Donne, The Sermons of John Donne, edited by George R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1958), IX, 9-10.

⁵Mueller, p. 106.

⁶Ibid., p. 105.

⁷John Donne, The Sermons of John Donne, edited by George R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1957), III, 3.

⁸Donne, I, 119.

⁹Ibid., I, 97. Cf. Evelyn M. Simpson, A Study of the Prose Works of John Donne (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1948), p. 59.

¹⁰Simpson, p. 57.

¹¹Mueller, pp. 114-145.

¹²Ibid., p. 144.

¹³Ibid., p. 171.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 116-117.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 116.

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¹William R. Mueller, John Donne: Preacher (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1962), p. 177.

²John Donne, Donne's Sermons, edited by Logan Pearsall Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1919), p. xxvii.

³John Donne, The Sermons of John Donne, edited by George R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1957), III, 31-32.

⁴Mueller, p. 256.

⁵Ibid., p. 255.

⁶Itrat Husain, The Dogmatic and Mystical Theology of John Donne (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1938), pp. 128-129.

⁷John Donne, The Sermons of John Donne, edited by George R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1958), IX, 41.

⁸Ibid., p. 43.

⁹William R. Mueller, "The Sermons of John Donne," Christianity Today, VI (September 28, 1962), 10.

¹⁰William R. Mueller, John Donne: Preacher (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1962), pp. 197-198.

¹¹Joseph Sittler, The Care of the Earth (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), pp. 9-10.

¹²Mueller, Preacher, p. 172.

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¹John Donne, The Sermons of John Donne, edited by George R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1955), II, 26.

²William R. Mueller, John Donne: Preacher (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1962), p. 38.

³Ibid., pp. 111-113.

⁴Ibid., p. 119.

⁵Ibid., p. 117.

⁶John Donne, The Sermons of John Donne, edited by George R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1953), I, 70.

⁷Mueller, p. 117.

⁸Ibid.

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