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A Survey of Representative Lutheran Preachers Concerning Technical Language in the Exposition of Selected Doctrines

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A SURVEY OF REPRESENTATIVE LUTHERAN PREACHERS CONCERNING
TECHNICAL LANGUAGE IN THE EXPOSITION OF SELECTED DOCTRINES

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PREFACE

The purpose of this paper is to show that simple language is basic to all the excellencies of effective speech. Particular reference is made to the work of the preacher in the pulpit. The preacher must use language commonly understood, if he is to make himself understood, if he is to persuade, and if he is to move to action.

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PART ONE

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CHAPTER I

CLARITY

The most important quality of good style is clarity. This means the use of familiar words, phrases, and sentences. "Clearness of diction is found where words are so used that the audience to whom they are addressed will understand them in their intended meaning."[1] It would be folly to assume that because the words used by the speaker are clear to him, that they are also clear to his hearers. When we speak of a clear speaking style we mean a use of words that are clear both to the speaker and to the hearers, and which are used by both speaker and audience in their own thinking.

> Clearness, here, depends on one or two things: chief among them is the employment of plain simple Anglo-Saxon words, accurately and delicately used. One writer has said that the language of preaching should be "the language of the market-place and the home raised to its highest power." Matthew Arnold defines good writing as simple chaste language used with a "high seriousness."[2]

In order to be clear in his speech it is necessary for the speaker to avoid: the language of exhibition, fine

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1. Th. Graebner, *The Expository Preacher*, p. 155.
2. James Black, *The Mystery of Preaching*, p. 115.

writing, poetical words, euphu isms, unrestrained language, technical terms, sentimental words, and coldly correct language.

> Special lingo has its place. Whenever a speaker is addressing an audience of fellow scientists or fellow craftsmen, he may well use the jargon of that group; but when he is addressing an audience of laymen, he does well to avoid technical terms, as far as possible; and when he must use them, to translate them at once into the everyday language of his hearers. [3]

The speaker has no right to assume that the technical language familiar to him is familiar to his hearers. It is true that there are well-informed laymen in our Lutheran churches and that many of them are acquainted with theological language since their confirmation days. But even though these people are acquainted with the technical language of religion, we dare not assume that they know what the technical terms mean. They perhaps did know once upon a time, but that was long ago. "To give a subject absorbability is the minister's task; until he moves into the listeners' medium his technical jargon is as strange to them as Sanskrit." [4] If we would concede that the people in the audience who had been confirmed in a Lutheran church understand the technical language of religion, we would still have to consider the outsiders who attend church services. They are apt to have an inadequate conception of the meaning of technical religious terms.

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3. Lew Sarett and William Trufant Foster, Basic Principles of Speech, p. 531.
4. John Nicholls Booth, The Quest for Preaching Power, p. 111.

Where the terminology of dogmatics is introduced or obsolete and rare forms of King James (A.V.) Bible English are used, the connection should be such as to make these forms or terms intelligible, or synonyms must be employed to make their meaning clear. It must not be presumed that the hearer will understand such terms as reconciliation, sanctification, impute, atone, etc., unless care is taken to describe the ideas embodied in these terms. [5]

There is also the danger that preachers who are scholars will unconsciously fall into the habit of using technical language. When words become very familiar to ourselves it is easy to take it for granted that others are also familiar with these words. "Scholars immured in texts devoted to philosophy and religion should avoid those German words and phrases which abound in the theological lexicon." [6] Daniel Webster decided that he would have to use the language of the common people in his political career if he was to make a success of it. Here are his words: "I concluded if I was to get my living by talking to plain people, I must have a plain style." [7]

The illustration is a powerful clarifier. There is nothing like a good illustration to make a point clear to the people. The best illustrations are taken from the lives of the people. If we can connect the religious idea that we want to put across, with something the people already are

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5. Graebner, op. cit., p. 155.
6. Booth, op. cit., p. 112.
7. Daniel Webster quoted by John Nicholls Booth in The Quest for Preaching Power, p. 111.

familiar with, chances are they will understand it and
remember it. Illustrations can take the form of word pictures.
Figures of speech perhaps make the best illustrations. Il-
lustrations should be used to explain the abstract and show
how it works in life. When an illustration accurately and
forcefully clinches a spiritual truth, then it has served
its purpose. The principle of a good illustration is this:
to go from the known to the unknown. In this way the illus-
tration makes for clearness, assists the memory, and rests
the audience.

Another element in clarity is the use of simple language.
It has already been mentioned that Anglo-Saxon words are short
and many of them are monosyllabic. Few adjectives should be
used, since all useless words obscure the meaning of a sen-
tence. Adjectives should be used only if they are needed.
Brevity is a necessary part of clarity. Words should have as
few syllables as possible, consistent with clarity. Sentences
should be short as a rule, and all verbiage that serves no
particular purpose should be cut out. It is only clear, simple
English that carries weight with the common people:

> Give up your pride of scholarship. Don't try
> to be known for your mastery of English. Try to be
> known for the satisfaction with which we listen to
> you and the ease with which we follow you. The
> great sermons win a kind of admiration, we know; but
> the friendly, patient, simple, Sunday sermons are
> the ones that bring us back to our duty, that make
> the rough way smooth, that make us glad to have lived,

and help us hopefully to die. [8]

The spoken word has to be clear because it is heard only once. The hearer has no chance to retrace his thinking if he has failed to hear a word, or failed to understand it. "No style deserves to be called perspicuous which needs a second reading." [9] Preachers "though they think with the learned, must speak with the common people." [10]

In order to get people to listen to the speaker it is necessary that clear and simple language is used. Most people are not used to listening to speeches for any length of time without give and take. Unless the speaker uses language so simple that it cannot be misunderstood, it is very likely that the listener will shut off his attention as soon as he loses the drift of the speech.

Kuhlmann treats the doctrine of sanctification with clarity and force:

> And where shall we begin? As leaders, or as followers, the beginning must be made in our own lives as Christians. Here, like the boy Jesus, we must increase "in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man." Honest self-appraisal will show that thus far our progress in these things has been lamentably slow. We have barely made a beginning - even, the best of us. Paul confessed, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after." That must be our frank admission, too, and may it be true of each of us that we really "follow after," that we earnestly seek to walk "in His steps." [11]

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8. O'Brien Atkinson, How to Make Us Want Your Sermon, p. 133.
9. Austin Phelps, English Style in Public Discourse, p. 155.
10. Wesley quoted by Austin Phelps in English Style in Public Discourse, p. 152.
11. Edward Kuhlmann, Cross Examined, A Series of Sermons, p.81.

In the paragraph just quoted sanctification is described as a continual striving to be as Jesus was, to grow as he grew. The language is simple and direct. The word sanctification is not used, but there is no doubt that the speaker is talking about sanctification. He shows us the essence of sanctification by using the language of the people. He makes it more clear by using an illustration, the growth of Jesus. Then by quoting the Apostle Paul he shows what our attitude must be over against sanctification, how we must never allow ourselves to believe that we are holy enough, but that we must keep on growing.

Here is another way of describing sanctification, again without using the word sanctification:

> With the so-called laymen worship at church, church membership dare not be a mere conventionality, an inherited custom, a social choice. A layman can be a light of the world, and the salt of the earth, only by making his Christianity appear to his fellow-men as a real, vital, uncompromising principle in his thinking, willing, and doing. Thus it was with his Christian forbears whom the heathen slew, and who would not renounce their faith in Jesus, their Redeemer from sin, death, and hell. They were mostly laymen. [12]

In this paragraph the speaker did not make the idea of sanctification as clear as he might have done. He used words which the average layman might not understand: conventionality, social choice, uncompromising principle. The illustration referred to in the paragraph is not specific and hence

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12. Olin S. Reigstad, Gethsemane to Calvary, pp. 30-31.

would not carry much weight with the hearer. The paragraph
is not clear because it deals with abstractions rather than
concrete ideas.

Here is another example of a speaker's using big words
to describe a certain phase of sanctification:

> Even the mass of men in the trenches, being
> there by the mandate of the few in authority,
> have but little of real hatred in their hearts
> for those against whom they are compelled to
> raise the death-dealing hand. And many a time on
> the field of carnage, as those opposed have both
> received the thrust which meant death, they have
> forgotten all rancor, ministered to each other's
> necessities, and entered the presence of the
> great Judge as brethren. And the day is approach-
> ing when there will be such a brotherhood of man
> that the congress of nations will take away the
> despotism of the few. In that Christian democracy
> of humanity war, and all kindred violence will be
> relegated to the limbo of outgrown barbarities,
> on which men will look with the burning cheek of
> shame. Then, more and more, questions of polity
> will be solved by processes of a regenerated
> reason, and a sanctified common sense. [13]

In this paragraph words are used which might be diffi-
cult for the layman to grasp: mandate, carnage, rancor,
despotism, relegated, limbo, polity. The speaker did not
use particular care to select all his words from the vocabu-
lary of the common people, from the language that they think
with. It is true that some of the words referred to exist
in the list of words understood by the average person. But
these words do not occur in the thinking and speaking vocabu-
lary of the average layman. The word limbo in particular

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13. Robert Emory Golladay, _Sermons on the Catechism_, p. 37.

ought not be used because it is not commonly understood.

Here are a few instances where the word sanctify is used in an obscure way, without defining it:

> Lent has no magic power. These weeks preceding Easter possess no special virtue nor sanctifying influence...It is this Lenten truth which has the power to sanctify our souls. [14]

The speaker here seems to take it for granted that the hearers will know what the word sanctify means. Especially those people who have had no previous religious instruction, will be baffled by such expressions. If the context would explain the word the hearer could get the meaning. But even that is not done in this instance.

Lindemann presents the doctrine of redemption with clarity:

> The main thing in life is to come to the living waters and drink. There is no kind of thirst of the soul that this fount cannot satisfy. If you thirst to have your sins forgiven, come and drink of this water and your sins are forgiven, for here flow the waters of Christ's atoning merits. If you thirst with a desire to conquer sin, to snap off the chains of habit that bind you, to gain the mastery over your evil self, drink here, and you will get the desire of your heart, for here flow the waters of a divine power that can conquer sin, the power of Him who has in your stead overcome sin. [15]

In the paragraph preceding the one quoted, the speaker talked about Christ dying on the cross. In the paragraph quoted above the speaker shows what the work of Christ can do for the sinner if he will only accept it. Salvation is

14. Edward W. Schramm, Our Great Salvation and The Centrality of the Cross, p. 7.
15. Paul Lindemann, Vesper Sermons, p. 151.

described as water that needs only to be drunk in order that it may give its benefits to the sinner. By drinking of the living water which flows from the work of Christ the sinner gets what he wants: the victory over sin, evil habits, and his own evil nature. The words used in this paragraph are simple and clear. The repeated references to water and drinking make the idea of redemption so clear that anyone can grasp it.

Christ's redemptive work is presented clearly by Dau in one of his sermons:

Jesus, accordingly, came to earth with a commission to teach men the knowledge of salvation from sin, death, and eternal damnation - of that salvation which had been decided upon in heaven. He represented Himself to His fellow-men in His assumed manhood as One who had been "sent" to speak to them in behalf of their heavenly Father, who wished to reclaim them for Himself. Step by step He labored like a patient teacher who wrestles with the ignorance and stubbornness of rude pupils to explain to them the plan and method by which God would restore them to their lost birthright. He told them that they must look upon Him as their proxy, who had been placed under the law that they had broken, to fulfill it in their stead, and who would give His innocent, sinless life, as a ransom for their forfeited lives. If they would believe this teaching of His, God would adopt them again as His children, made righteous by the righteousness which His Son had procured for them without any merit or worthiness of their own. [16]

In the preceding paragraph Dr. Dau compares Christ with a teacher who is sent to educate his pupils in regard to a truth which is very important for them. God has disowned the sinner as His child. But Christ shows the sinner how

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16. William H. T. Dau, Utterances of Jesus, pp. 14-15.

God is willing to accept him as His child again if only the sinner will believe on Jesus. The illustration of Christ as teacher is interesting and clear. The work of Christ is described in words which can hardly be misunderstood. Only seven adjectives are used in the paragraph, thus adding to the clarity of the whole.

CHAPTER II

FORCE

Force is an important element of good style. Strong impressions are lasting impressions. There are various elements in language that contribute to a forceful style. Some words are weak, others strong. "Pick out the words which can stand up straight." [1] Words that drive home a point vividly and emphatically are strong words. Care should be taken not to tone down a strong word with qualifying or modfying phrases. Short words are more forceful than long words.

Economy in words is an aid to force. The less words we use to express a given idea the more strongly each individual word will impinge upon the consciousness of the hearer.

> Force may be achieved in part through economy in the use of words. An effective speaker does not say "The very identical thing," or "The ship was surrounded on all sides by the sea." He does not say, "The whole town was burned down to the foundations; the city was consumed entirely in a general and complete conflagration." [2]

Force is gained by using specific rather than general terms, by using concrete rather than abstract language, by using vivid rather than drab words. Some writers have the Habit of saying things in a roundabout way. Instead of making a clear and simple statement of fact, they try to dress

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1. Charles Reynolds Brown, The Art of Preaching, p. 180.
2. Sarett and Foster, op. cit., p. 534.

up the strong, bare truth in long words and supposedly
beautiful modifiers. The position of words in a sentence
has a bearing on force. The forceful positions in a sen-
tence are the beginning and the end. Force may also be
gained by the use of climax or antithesis.

> Force is gained by the skillful use of anti-
> thesis and balance in sentence-structure, by the
> use of climax, by the use of short words, concrete
> words, and specific words, and by the avoidance of
> roundabout modes of expression. Compare this
> sentence: "The inebriate pushed the door open with
> considerable effort and damaged it"; with this sen-
> tence: "The drunkard crashed the door off its
> hinges." Again, "She misstated the facts deliber-
> ately" is a weak way of saying "She lied." [3]

Let us take a look at two paragraphs on the doctrine of
man. The one paragraph gives us an example of how force may
be lost in a speaker's style:

> What an absorbingly interesting, and supreme-
> ly important problem is this of human personality;
> that which the psychologist calls "The self," of
> which we are always conscious. "This self" knows
> that even the body, in the strictest sense, is not
> "I," but mine. The real secret of man as a self-
> conscious, volitional being, with all his hopes and
> fears, is that back of him, above him, surrounding
> him on every side, besetting him everywhere, there
> is a parental, sustaining Personality, and that
> through our own nature, and through all creation
> around us, this original, uncreated Person, God, is
> upholding us, speaking to us, seeking to influence us. [4]

A professor of philosophy or psychology might be able to
grasp this paragraph without studying it. But for the aver-
age layman it would be very difficult. The paragraph would

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3. Ibid.
4. Colladay, op. cit., p. 32.

be more forceful if expressed in the language of the common man; at least it would be more forceful to him. The whole paragraph might be condensed in this way to make it more forceful and more clear: To know what we really are is an interesting and important problem. The bodies that we have are not our true selves. Our bodies are part of us. But the soul that you and I have is the most important part of us. This soul was made by God and came from God. God still provides for us and helps us.

Here is another paragraph describing man:

St. Paul also tells us why in these spiritual matters man's word is mere babble and vanity. It is because the world in its wisdom knows not God. God Himself alone is able to tell us the truth about Himself; for God's affairs are such that no eye hath seen them and no ear hath heard them, neither have they entered into the heart of man. 1 Cor. 2. When therefore a man, though he be the very wisest of them all, presumes to speak his own thoughts upon God's eternal business and purposes, it is as if one born blind insisted upon lecturing to us upon the colors and paintings which he has never seen. Such talk is mere foolish twaddle. Such foolish and ignorant prattle may cause other foolish people to stare for a moment, but it will never bring about the new birth of a sinner. The Word of man is as the breath of man; it may make a candlelight quaver and a leaf quiver, but it will not awaken the dead nor transform darkness into light.[5]

Here we have a paragraph that strikes us forcefully. We note that the words used are short and simple and taken from common life. Most of the sentences are short and pithy. The illustrations used are perhaps the most helpful single factor in building up strength. Man trying to explain the things

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5. M. Sommer, Vesper Sermons, p. 224.

of God, is like a blind man lecturing on colors and pictures which he has never seen. This illustration puts force into the paragraph. The insignificance of man's word is furthermore illustrated by comparing it with a breeze that makes a candle flicker or a leaf quiver. But the Word of God can awaken the dead and change darkness into light. There is force in that contrast.

Geiseman is forceful in his description of sin:

> Sin is a barrier which shuts men out from God. It acts as such a barrier in several different ways. Sin shuts men out from God first of all because it fills their hearts with a determination to stay away from God. When men love sin they do not love God and so long as they want to cling to the sin which they love so long do they have no desire to come into God's presence. This reveals itself so many times in the lives of individuals.[6]

All the words used in this paragraph are simple. Most of the sentences are short. The constructions are easy. Only two adjectives are used. There is no excess verbiage to clutter the view and to obstruct the force of the ideas expressed. Describing sin as a barrier makes it concrete and so adds force to the description. Force is gained by the progression of ideas beginning with the fact that sin separates from God and climaxing with the fact that man wants to sin and so brings this situation about.

"Lent has come again, my dear hearers, and you and I have an appointment with our Savior - at the foot of the cross."[7]

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6. O. A. Geiseman, The Christ Men Need, p. 60.
7. Schramm, op. cit., p. 63.

Here we find the use of the most common words building up
a force of expression that is remarkable. By using a phrase
from everyday life, "you and I have an appointment," and
linking it up with our Savior, we get a clause that expresses
strong obligation. It forces us to admit to ourselves that
we did make an appointment with Jesus and that we are ob-
ligated to keep that appointment.

CHAPTER III

CONCRETENESS

A good style is a concrete style. The average person cannot follow the abstract very long. Religion as expressed in a doctrinal way is abstract. The preacher who uses such abstract terms as sanctification and justification without trying to make them concrete by illustrations and explanations will have difficulty in putting his ideas across to the people. In general, technical language, be it the language of religion, science, or philosophy, is abstract language. If technical language is used in a sermon it should be connected with things that are tangible and concrete. Or better still, the whole idea of some theological abstraction should be explained in the words of the people, simple words with good handles on them.

In preaching on the doctrine of prayer Dr. O. A. Geiseman describes in a concrete way what we should pray for:

> When we make a choice of a career; when we select our mate for life; when we battle against illness and disease; when we seek to cope with the problems of business or profession - all of these are matters in which He is ready to be our helper. Whatsoever we may need for body or for soul, for time or for eternity He is ready to give. But, we should pray.[1]

It is easy to talk about prayer in an abstract way and

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1. Geiseman, op. cit., p. 19.

to urge people to pray. But that sort of preaching will not
tent to result in action. Somehow or other, laymen do not
always make the proper application of what they have heard.
But when a doctrine such as prayer is intimately connected
with the life of the individual so that he feels he can
really get some good out of it, then our preaching will re-
sult in action. In the paragraph quoted above Dr. Geiseman
makes prayer something concrete and practical. He shows how
it should be used in definite phases of our life.

> Jesus of Nazareth held a scepter that was uni-
> versal. Powers unlimited were vested in Him, so
> that He reigned ad infinitum. Every planet in the
> vast created system, every star, every constella-
> tion, every galaxy of created things reaching out
> into the peripheral limits of eternity, was obedi-
> ent to His beck and call. Never would they see an-
> other like Him until the end of time, when He will
> return in the clouds with great power and glory.[2]

Instead of saying "ad infinitum" a more simple expres-
sion could have been used to make the idea of Christ's uni-
versal kingdom more concrete. Most people don't understand
such phrases as "the peripheral limits of eternity." Such
phrases are mere abstractions to them. It might have added
more to the concreteness of the idea of Christ's universal
kingdom if some reference had been made to Christ's rule
over all people and His control of world affairs.

Here is another quotation from the same speaker:

The Gospel bears certain distinguishing marks, and

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2. Reigstad, op. cit., p. 44.

they are the same wherever you find them. They are
these: propitiation, pardon, and purity. Isaiah's
concept of propiation is clearly set forth in the
Fifty-third chapter of the book which bears his
name. The principle of the substitutionary sacri-
fice is asserted there. Pardon and purity are the
gifts proclaimed in this chapter.[3]

We might well label this paragraph on redemption one

great abstraction. There is perhaps not one concrete thing

mentioned except the Gospel and the Fifty-third chapter of

Isaiah. But the great ideas brought out in the paragraph

are presently abstractly. Such words as propiation and sub-

stitutionary sacrifice should not be used unless explained in

a concrete way.

Pieper has a concrete description of the power of God's

Word:

An assurance of this kind we have in the words
of our text - a gem of rare beauty and excellence
which the gracious God may cause to sparkle within
our hearts, dispelling therefrom every shadow of
doubt and distrust.[4]

What a concrete picture, the Word of God a gem in our

hearts, sparkling and expelling our evil thoughts. The idea

of a gem is easy to grasp. It is a vivid picture easy to

remember.

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4. F. Pieper, Vesper Sermons, p. 197.

CHAPTER IV
ACCURACY

To be accurate in speech means to use the specific rather than the general term. It might be argued that technical terms are more accurate than terms in common usage. Strictly speaking this may be true. But the important thing for a speaker to remember is that the conception that the hearers have of a certain word is all important. Even though the speaker himself knows the precise meaning of a technical term he cannot assume that his listeners have the same understanding. As a rule, the words in common usage will more accurately convey an idea to the listener than a precise technical term which means little or nothing to him. The most accurate word that can be used in a given speech situation is the most accurate word in common usage.

> As a rule the accurate word is specific rather than general. Specific words are usually image-making and vivid. For the general words "criminal" and "tree," suppose we substitute the specific words "pickpocket" and "pine-tree." The gain in accuracy is evident. [1]

In selecting the accurate word for a given idea, the idiom of the language must be taken into consideration. The most accurate word is not the word used in the time of Shakespeare or even in the nineteenth century. The most

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1. Sarett and Foster, op. cit., p. 534.

accurate word is the inevitable word in common usage today. At times the most accurate word may be a colloquial expression. The speaker who wishes to hit the bull's eye with the words he uses dare not be satisfied with using words that he knows to be acceptable English. He must have an awareness of the times as far as words are concerned, and speak accordingly.

It should be mentioned too, that accuracy means using no more shots than necessary. The speaker who can hit his target with one word is certainly more accurate than the man who requires three words.

Here is an example of missing the mark:

"Whatever Easter was or is, it is God's eternal self-vindication. God is righteousness. He was that. He is that. He is not going to be frustrated by evil."[2]

Everything that is said in the above paragraph about the resurrection of Christ is true. If the hearers knew exactly what "God's eternal self-vindication" means we could also say the expression is accurate. As far as the speaker is concerned, the expression is accurate. But is it accurate for the hearers? It is true that later on in the paragraph the speaker explains the phrase, without however mentioning it again. Why use such a phrase as "God's eternal self-vindication" if it is accurate for the speaker only, and not for the hearer?

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2. Gerhard E. Lenski, When God Gave Easter, p. 3.

Kuhlmann achieves accuracy in discussing the resurrection:

> Unbelief says "No." When the final earthly
> chapter in any man's life is written, unbelief
> writes below that last chapter, the words, "The
> End." Then comes faith and takes the pen, crosses
> out the words unbelief has written, and in their
> stead it writes the words, "To Be Continued." Oh,
> how great is faith! We could not have faith in
> after-death continuance of life if Easter had not
> dawned. [3]

Faith here is accurately portrayed as doing something. Faith is pictured as a man writing words and characterizing the life of an individual after he has died. The whole picture is accurate because it is true and because it is easy to understand. Expressions such as are used in the quotation just cited will hit the mark every time.

Death is accurately described in the following question: "What of that last grim disturber of our human plans, the angel called Death, who insists on hanging his crepe on every door?"[4] In a most vivid and accurate way the speaker describes death. Death is called a "disturber of our human plans." He is called a grim, unwelcome disturber. The fact that he "insists on hanging his crepe" accurately brings out the idea that death is inevitable even though unwelcome. The phrase "on every door" accurately denotes the idea that no one can escape death's visit.

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3. Kuhlmann, op. cit., p. 92.
4. Lenski, op. cit., p. 10.

Here is an accurate description of sin: "'The sins of men are the wounds of God.' Sin nailed Christ to the cross; sin put Him to death. He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities."[5] The effects of sin are well and accurately described by calling sins the wounds of Christ. It is correct to say that sin caused the wounds of Christ. It is also accurate to say that "sin nailed Christ to the cross" and that "sin put Him to death." Nothing but the simplest language is used in these expressions, but still we have an accurate description of the sinfulness of sin and the terrible results of sin. Not only are these expressions accurate, but they are also clear and forceful.

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5. Schramm, op. cit., p. 65.

PART TWO

SIMPLE LANGUAGE IS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO PERSUADE

A. A prerequisite is that the speaker throughly understand his subject.
   1. Both preacher and audience sometimes assume they know the meaning of technical terms because they are used so often.
   2. Using the language of the people would force the preacher to know the meaning of his technical language.
   3. When the preacher uses the language of the people, the people are able to think through their religion in their own terms.
B. Persuasive speech means the whole man talking.
   1. Using technical language cramps the individuality of the preacher.
   2. Using the language of the people helps the preacher to effectively assert his individual personality.
C. Persuasive speech implies the eagerness to communicate.
   1. The speaker must have a will to enter thehearts and minds of the people.
   2. The use of simple languagemakes the hearers feel that the speaker is eager to communicate.
D. Persuasive speech must be connected with ease.
   1. Technical language alienates an audience.
   2. The use of their language makes the people feel comfortable.
E. Persuasive speech requires empathy.
F. In order to be persuasive, proof must be in the language of the people.
G. Good communication is a requisite for persuasion.
   1. The speaker communicates only when he stirs up the experience for which the symbol stands.
   2. For the purpose of persuasion the speakermust use the symbols that stir up a lot of meaning for the hearers.

CHAPTER I

UNDERSTANDING OF SUBJECT

The big job of any preacher is to persuade. In order
to do this he must thoroughly understand his subject and
must present it in such a way that his audience thoroughly
understands what he is talking about.

Both preacher and audience sometimes assume they know
the meaning of technical terms because they are used so of-
ten. But they are often mistaken. The sound of the words
is familiar and the words convey a certain idea in a certain
connection, but taken alone they would convey only a warped
conception of their full meaning.

> There are many Scriptural phrases and words
> which, I apprehend, are not sufficiently intel-
> ligible to the majority of the (British) congre-
> gation. The very frequency of their use is one
> cause of their being imperfectly understood, be-
> cause people take it for granted that they know
> what they hear every day. I mean such words as
> justification, regeneration, communion of saints,
> living in the Spirit, walking in the flesh; such
> words and phrases will, I am afraid, convey no
> clear and definite idea to the majority of your
> hearers. [1]

The only solution for this situation is to break the
technical terms down into simple, everyday expressions. In
this way the preacher is forced to think through his

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1. William Gresley, "Ecclesiasticus Anglicanus,"
quoted in Th. Graebner, The Expository Preacher, p. 156.

technical terms, and he can present them in a much simpler
and more practical way to his hearers. Thinking through
technical terms and presenting them in the words which the
hearers think with, is a big aid in persuasion.

> If a speaker constantly tries to achieve
> accuracy through the use of specific words, he
> not only makes his meaning clearer to others, but
> he forms the habit of compelling himself to clarify
> his ideas in his own mind. [2]

If the preacher thinks through his theology in the lan-
guage of the people and presents it in this way, he stimu-
lates them to do thinking of their own. It is not likely
that the layman will talk about his religion if he has to
use special words that are used only on Sundays. But if
theological terms are broken down into the speech of the lay-
man we can also expect that he will think his religion
through for himself and talk to others about it.

Reigstad uses technical terms without explaining them:

> The Gospel bears certain distinguishing marks,
> and they are the same wherever you find them.
> They are these: propiation, pardon, and purity.
> Isaiah's concept of propitiation is clearly set
> forth in the Fifty-third chapter of the book which
> bears his name. The principle of the substitution-
> ary sacrifice is asserted there. Pardon and purity
> are the gifts proclaimed in this chapter. [3]

In this paragraph technical terms are used: propi-
tiation," "the principle of the substitutionary sacrifice,"
"Isaiah's concept of propitiation." These expressions are

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2. Sarett and Foster, op. cit., p. 534.
3. Reigstad, op. cit., p. 106.

not explained anywhere in the sermon. Unless the hearers
were well indoctrinated they would not understand these words.

How much easier it would be for people to understand
the preacher if he would explain the technical terms he uses.
In the following paragraph Golladay makes clear the idea
of incarnation.

> Here, now we have the explanation of the oft
> used word, - incarnation. Carnal means pertaining
> to the flesh. To incarnate means to clothe in
> flesh. Incarnation means being clothed in flesh.
> And the incarnation means that the eternal Son of
> God came down from heaven, and was clothed in
> flesh; taking on Himself a body of flesh and blood,
> yet without sin. And in this form He dwelt among
> men, and those who allowed the Spirit to give them
> vision were privileged to see, shining forth in the
> words and deeds of Jesus, the glory of God." 4

If the preacher feels the need of using technical lan-
guage he should explain it as was done in the preceding par-
agraph. Again and again the word incarnation was used with
its meaning. When the word was used again at least some of
the hearers knew what it meant. The picture used, the Son
of God clothing Himself in flesh, was vivid enough to im-
press the idea of incarnation upon the minds of the hearers.
It is evident in this paragraph that the speaker had in mind
a clear idea of the meaning of incarnation. He used the
words of the people in describing incarnation. The hearers
should have had no difficulty in following the speaker's
train of thought.

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4. Golladay, op. cit., p. 196.

The idea of growth in sanctification is described in
the following paragraph without any specific mention of the
word sanctification being made:

> The real secret of growth in holiness of life
> is to walk closer to Christ, in fuller fellowship
> with Him. The Holy Spirit is the active agent,
> but what He does is to bring Christ to us, to make
> Him more effective in our lives. Jesus says, "I
> am the vine, ye are the branches; without me ye
> can do nothing." But drawing our power from Christ
> we may learn to say with St. Paul, "I can do all
> things through Christ, who strengtheneth me." [5]

It might have added to the understanding of the para-
graph if the word holiness had been defined. The idea of
Christ being "more effective in our lives" should have been
explained. Otherwise, the paragraph is very understandable.

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5. Golladay, op. cit., p. 370.

CHAPTER II

WHOLE MAN TALKING

In order to persuade people we talk not only with words, but also with our character and our personality. The man who is one type of person in ordinary conversation and another type of man when he speaks in public, is inconsistent. In order to be effective in the pulpit and to persuade his hearers the preacher must be himself as his people know him in personal contacts. We all know people who are the most delightful conversationalists. They know how to use just the right words to indicate their thoughts, and very simple words too. But when they speak in public they seem altogether different people. Their expression becomes sober and dead. Their style becomes stiff and ponderous. Their vocabulary changes completely from words that anyone can understand to words that only certain people understand. There are also preachers who use technical words both in private conversation and in the pulpit.

The persuasive power of a man's delivery in the pulpit would be greatly increased if instead of using technical language he would use the language of the people. His listeners would begin to realize that they can follow his train of thought without difficulty, and that the preacher is really talking to them.

A speaker should be natural and simple. Then he will be able to be himself on the platform. This is brought out by Kirkpatrick:

> The reader will infer from the preceding chap-
> ters, if he is convinced that the conversational
> standard is the correct standard both in basis and
> expression, that two of the outstanding characteris-
> tics of delivery, so based and so expressed, are
> naturalness and simplicity. We know that the great
> orators of the present are free from abstruseness
> in matter, formality in manner, ostentation in
> literary style, and affectation in delivery. So,
> too, were the greatest orators of the past, judg-
> ing from examples of their oratory, biographies
> and other sources. What could be more direct and
> natural than the greatest oration that we have in-
> herited from the past, "The Oration on the Crown,"
> by Demosthenes! True oratory is clear, spontaneous,
> frank, unadorned, and unaffected. In other words,
> it is simple and natural.

Golladay shows his zeal and enthusiasm in this paragraph on conversion:

> We are not to rest content with a picture of
> that which has been made possible for man. The
> possible has, in all these ages, been becoming the
> actual. In all these centuries the image of God
> in man has been in the process of restoration.
> This world has held men and women, they may be seen
> today, in whose soul there burns, in whose face
> there shines, the light of a new life; recollection
> brings from their eyes bitter tears of sorrow for
> the sins by which their lives have been marred;
> they are in love with truth, purity, righteousness;
> selfishness has been cast out, love has come in;
> they are giving and living to serve. Oh, yes,
> there have been men and women, there are men and
> women today, and many of them when we come to think
> of it, whose faces reflect the light of heaven,
> whose conduct bears witness that its inspiration
> was gained from heavenly sources. In the presence

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1. Frank Home Kirkpatrick, Public Speaking, p. 24.

of such people it is easy to believe the statement that man was made in the image of God. [2]

When we read this paragraph we get the impression that Golladay is talking with all the feeling and eloquence he can command. He is trying to convince his hearers that a Christian is different from other people, and that Christianity is worthwhile. He is putting everything he has into his expression. The words he uses are not difficult. We do not get the impression that he is trying to show us how well he can talk, but rather that he is straining all his faculties to get across to people the idea that Christians are loving and noble and happy. We get the impression that the speaker is chiefly interested in communicating.

In a description of the universe which shows the exist-of God, Golladay is indirect and distant:

On the part of man universally these thoughts about the primary phenomena of the universe, and human life as the most significant part of the visible universe, lead to one universal deduction: back of the visible there is something not tangibly revealed; back of the things made there is a Maker; back of life there is a Life-giver; back of all discernible movement there is an Artist. And all the world has united in calling this wise master-builder, this almighty ruler - God. [3]

In the first part of this paragraph Golladay speaks like a scientist or a philosopher. But he is not talking as a speaker should talk in order to convince the average

2. Golladay, op. cit., p. 36.
3. Golladay, op. cit., p. 52.

audience. His words are large and unnatural for the average hearer. This paragraph would give the impression that the speaker is talking over the heads of the listeners. In order to speak with his whole personality a speaker must use simple and natural language.

CHAPTER III

EAGERNESS TO COMMUNICATE

In order to persuade, it is necessary that the speaker have a will to communicate, a desire to get close to the people mentally. In order to do this it is necessary to know how the people think. If the speaker succeeds in anticipating the thoughts of the hearers, he also establishes mental affinity. When the hearers realize that the speaker is thinking their thoughts with them and carrying on from there, mental contact is established. The speaker who. is interested in getting an idea across to his hearers will take care to think with them and for them.

One of the biggest aids in convincing the hearers th at the speaker is eager to communicate is the use of their vocabulary. When people realize that the speaker is thinking their thoughts in their own words, they are going to listen to him. They are going to be convinced that the speaker really wants to talk to them. They are going to feel that they can get what the speaker is saying.

Dale points out that his unwillingness to communicate may be an unconscious thing, as he suggests a reason why speakers use language hard to understand:

> ...Probably this habit arises from unconscious un-
> willingness on the part of the preacher to come

into near mental contact with the people - a
grievous error since such closeness of mental con-
tact is one of the chief aids to spiritual impression...[1]

Lindemann enters right into the heart of the hearer and

offers him the solution for the things he needs most of all:

>   The main thing in life is to come to the
> living waters and drink. There is no kind of
> thirst of the soul that this fount cannot sa-
> tisfy. If you thirst to have your sins for-
> given, come and drink of this water and your
> sins are forgiven, for here flow the waters of
> Christ's atoning merits. If you thirst with
> a desire to conquer sin, to snap off the
> chains of habit that bind you, to gain the
> mastery over your evil self, drink here, and
> you will get the desire of your heart, for here
> flow the waters of a divine power that can conquer
> sin, the power of Him who has in your stead over-
> come sin. [2]

The desire to communicate is shown in this paragraph

not only by the fact that vital issues are dealt with, but

also by the use of simple language, picturesque language.

Simple language coming from the heart of the speaker, will

go the heart of the hearer. The hearer gets the impression

that the speaker knows his needs and is eager to do some-

thing about filling those needs.

Boecler might have spoken the following paragraph with

meaning to a group of theological students, but for the

average audience it would not serve to convey the impres-

sion that he was eager to communicate something about the

law:

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1. R. W. Dale, <u>Nine Lectures on Preaching</u>, p. 54.
2. Lindemann, <u>Forty-two Sermons</u>, p. 151.

Unnecessary it is to explain to you, over against the teaching of Rome, that, though Christ by His vicarious fulfilment, made an end of the moral law for righteousness to every one that believeth in Christ as the one Mediator between God and man, that law was thereby not abrogated, but confirmed as immutable and irrevocable, for which reason also it always does and must remain for the redeemed and sanctified child of God the guide of his life, by obedience to which he proves himself in truth a free and faithful child of God.[3]

This paragraph teems with technical words and phrases, and would therefore not be understood by the average hearer. "The teaching of Rome," "His vicarious fulfilment," "end of the moral law for righteousness," Mediator, abrogated, immutable, irrevocable, and "redeemed and sanctified child of God" are expressions that present only hazy ideas to the average hearer. He is not used to such terms. Since he cannot understand them, he will shut off his attention when he hears them. He will not get the impression that the speaker is eager to communicate, but rather that he doesn't care to make himself plain to the hearer.

Such expressions as "consummation of that plan,"[4] "disaster not to be retrieved," "God's eternal self-vindication,"[6] and "shoals of mediocrity,"[7] should not be used by a public speaker because they do not help to convey a message, they do not impress people favorably, and they do not convey the impression that the speaker is eager to communicate.

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3. Boecler, Forty-two Sermons, p. 27.
4. Schramm, op. cit., p. 8.
5. Lenski. op. cit., p. 1.
6. Ibid., p. 3.
7. Ibid., p. 9.

CHAPTER IV

EASE

Any stiffness and undue formalism on the part of the
speaker will alienate his audience instead of attracting
them. In order to persuade people it is necessary to create
an atmosphere of ease. People must feel comfortable when
they listen to a speaker. They must feel that they can get
what the speaker is saying, without much effort on their part.

A layman expresses himself on the subject:

> You will not talk to us in a friendly, heart-
> to-heart way until you break with the tradition
> that colloquial speech is in the same class with
> slang and vulgarity. Heart-to-heart talks are not
> carried on in the chilly air of formal expression.
> Their natural medium is the warm speech used by
> cultivated persons when they chat with their
> intimate friends.[1]

The language of the people must be used in order to
create an impression of ease. In order to get people to
relax and listen we must use words with which they are
familiar. Sometimes it is well to use a colloquial expres-
sion in order to assist in creating a comfortable atmosphere.
Language that is coldly coldly correct will alienate an
audience rather than attract it.

> Sometimes the language of a speaker is as
> coldly correct as an engraved invitation. It has

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1. Atkinson, op. cit., pp. 107-108.

no barbarism; no improprieties. It obeys all the
text-book rules of grammar and diction; it has
drawing-room manners. Yet we do not respond.
The trouble is that the speaker seems more concern-
ed with rules than with what he has to say. His
language does not "come alive." It has propriety
but it lacks distinction.[2]

Maier achieves ease in the following paragraph on the

justification of the sinner:

Your salvation is "great," indescribably
"great," also because it is offered freely, with-
out payment, by the most magnificent mercy sinners
can ever receive. Your redemption cost Jesus a
fearful price; but it costs you nothing. You can
come to the Savior just as you are, without fee
or price. You need only say: "O Christ, my sins
crush me. I hardly dare draw near You. There is
nothing good or praiseworthy in me. But I am
sorry for my transgressions and, O Jesus, I be-
lieve with my whole heart that on the cross You
became my Substitute and Atonement. Forgive me,
bless me, help me!" And the Savior whose arms are
outstretched to the weary and heavy laden will
reply: "Be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven
thee." "Thy faith hath saved thee." [3]

In this paragraph the atmosphere of ease is created not

only by using the first person and direct conversation, but

also by the use of simple words. The great needs of the soul

are expressed simply and fervently. There is no attempt to

speak in a grand way, but the grandness of the thoughts ex-

pressed in simple words is attractive. The hearer feels that

the speaker is talking directly to him without the barrier

of difficult language between them.

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2. Sarett and Foster, op. cit., p. 532.
3. Walter A. Maier, For Christ and Country, p. 5.

Baer loses ease in his discussion of justification:

> There are persons who think that this declaration of approval by Christ to the lawyer's answer is inconsistent with the doctrine of justification by faith and Paul's affirmation that "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified." The perfect fulfilling of God's law will win His favor, but who has ever given God perfect obedience?[4]

Sentences typified by the first one in the above paragraph, alienate an audience rather than set it at ease. The words used are difficult for the layman. It would have been more conducive to ease if simpler words had been used. In order to keep the hearer comfortable and at attention, words that are familiar to him should be used.

In a discussion of Christian stewardship Baer gives us an example of how ease may be achieved:

> When you are asked to do something in the church, do you answer, "There are others who can do that so much better than I"? Do you tell folks how you would sing, if you could sing like Jeanette MacDonald or Grace Moore, Nelson Eddy or Lawrence Tibbett, but refuse to use the voice God has given you? If you do, you are burying your talent...[5]

By making the issue very personal and by speaking of familiar things the speaker achieves ease in the quotation just cited. But the effect would be seriously hampered if the speaker had used big words instead of the words of the people. Simple language makes for ease.

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4. Dallas C. Baer, *Windows That Let in The Light*, pp. 49-50.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

CHAPTER V

EMPATHY

In order to persuade people it is necessary for the
speaker to get them to think and feel with him. It would
not serve the purposes of persuasion if only the speaker
concentrated on what he is saying. Both the speaker and the
hearers must be concentrating on the same subject at the
same time in order that the hearers may be persuaded. When
the speaker succeeds in getting his hearers to think with
him so intently that their muscular and emotional responses
are identical with his, then he has succeeded in producing
empathy. When empathy exists in a given speech situation
the hearers will be powerfully persuaded to accept the
speaker's ideas. This idea of empathy is brought out by
Kirkpatrick:

> The attitude of the teacher toward his pupils
> resembles the relationship of the public speaker to
> his audience. May I use a very elementary example?
> A teacher wishes to lead some children to under-
> stand that 2 + 2 = 4. He may proceed after this
> fashion: he holds up two sticks, and calls atten-
> tion to them, repeats the process with two others,
> then places them all together and focuses the at-
> tention upon the result. Thus, at the time of
> teaching, the teacher concentrates upon his ideas
> by concentrating the minds of the pupils upon them.[1]

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1. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 40.

In order to get the hearers to think and feel with the speaker it is highly important that he use their vocabulary. Words that are familiar to the audience will be particularly useful for riveting their attention on what the speaker is saying. Simple words should be used, words that convey much meaning, but attract little attention to themselves. The language of the people will be best suited to producing empathy in them.

By using technical language and comparatively hard words Kuhlmann loses empathy in discussing the doctrine of sanctification:

> While these lines are true in their disavowal of any ability on our part to work out our salvation by any form of self-righteousness our pride and self-sufficiency may devise, they are not true if we imagine that God expects nothing of us but a formal acceptance of Christ and a flabby, spineless acquiescence to certain denominationally prescribed doctrines concerning Him and His claims. No, He expects much more. He expects our discipleship with His Son to result in a consecrated study of His life, so that all our thinking and doing may be directed to new and nobler channels and that each day in our association with others we may give living evidence that we have been with Jesus...[2]

Such words as: Disavowal, self-righteousness, self-sufficiency, devise, acquiescence, and denominationally do not produce empathy. The use of such words will rather alienate the hearers and cause them to shut off their attention. Simple language must be used in order to produce empathy.

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2. Kuhlmann, op. cit., pp. 79-80.

Kuhlmann achieves empathy in speaking of the resurrection:

> Unbelief says "No." When the final earthly
> chapter in any man's life is written, unbelief
> writes below that last chapter, the words, "The End."
> Then comes faith and takes the pen, crosses out the
> words unbelief has written, and in their stead it
> writes the words, "To be continued." Oh, how great
> is faith! We could not have faith in after-death
> continuance of life if Easter had not dawned...[2]

There is not one word in this section that is so difficult as to interfere with communication of thought to the audience. Empathy is gained in this paragraph by direct speech, by personification, and by kinaesthetic and visual language. But all these devices would have lost their effectiveness if the speaker had used difficult language.

Kettner produces empathy in speaking about justification:

> Do you follow Peter as he goes out to weep
> bitterly? Do you weep with him, tears of penitence
> for your many transgressions, for the measure of
> suffering which your sins have caused Christ? Do
> you believe that He looks at you with pardon, in-
> deed, that He bears all that suffering for the sins
> of the world? Do you by faith see Jesus' love and
> forgiveness so surely promised in His Word? Then
> you can know as assuredly as you know that you are
> sitting here that you will be found acceptable on
> that Great Day, forgiven, cleansed, transformed
> into the likeness of Christ, to enjoy the bliss of
> heaven forever.[3]

By speaking directly to the people in simple language, and appealing to their emotions Kettner moves them and sways them to think with him and feel with him.

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2. Kuhlmann, op. cit., pp. 79-80.
3. Elmer A. Kettner, Symbols of His Suffering, p. 21.

CHAPTER VI
PROOF

There are three main types of proof used by speakers to persuade an audience: logical, emotional, and personal proof. Logical proof includes these factors: illustration, facts, testimony, and reasoning. Emotional appeals to the emotions of the hearers in order to bear out the truth of what is said. Personal proof is the weight of the speaker's character, his reputation, his whole life and person. All three types of proof may be effectively used to persuade an audience.

But none of these methods of proof will succeed unless the subject matter at hand is presented in simple language. An illustration that is foreign and unintellibible to the audience will not accomplish its purposes of persuasion and proof. Reasoning with technical language will convince no one unless he understands that language. Emotional proof is damaged by using words that confuse people. Even personal proof is hindered if the speaker habitually uses technical language. The hearers will get the impression that the speaker is not interested in them, or that he considers himself superior, if he insists on using language they cannot understand.

Reigstad weakens his proof for the universal kingship
of Christ, by using difficult words:

> Jesus was even more a king than Pilate knew,
> for He was the Lord of lords and the King of kings.
> Jesus of Nazareth held a scepter that was universal.
> Powers unlimited were vested in Him, so that He
> reigned ad infinitum. Every planet in the vast
> created system, every star, every constellation,
> every galaxy of created things reaching out into
> the peripheral limits of eternity, was obedient to
> His beck and call.[1]

There is good proof in this paragraph that Jesus is a
king and that His reign is universal. But the proof is weak-
ened by the use of such expressions as: "ad infinitum,"
"galaxy of created things," and "peripheral limits of eter-
nity." When the audience hear these expressions they will
try to puzzle them out and in that way lose the full impact
these words would convey if they were understandable to the
people.

In another paragraph Reigstad proves the resurrection
in a very effective manner:

> I know that Christ lives because He lives in
> me. A faith such as that cannot put us to shame.
> We place our hands upon our hearts and we say, I
> know He lives because He is there. Christ lives
> in me because He guides and rules my thoughts, my
> words, my deeds, and He gives me strength to take
> up the cross and follow Him. [2]

The simplicity of the paragraph makes the proof effective.
All the words are meaningful to the hearer, with the result
that he has no doubts in his mind as to the validity of the

1. Reigstad, op. cit., p. 44.
2. Ibid., pp. 73-74.

proof. The listener finds himself agreeing with each sen-
tence as it is spoken. The cumulative effect of all these
impressions is one of overwhelming proof and persuasion.

Dau loses force in trying to prove that when the Word
of God was not used the church suffered:

> On the other hand, stagnation, corruption, de-
> cay have set in when the mouths of Jesus' witnesses
> were hushed, when Christian principles were exchanged
> for prudent policies, when church members feared those
> who could destroy their bodies more than Him who can
> destroy their faithless souls. Or there came times
> when the church went bargaining in diplomatic com-
> promises with its adversaries, and made concessions
> by which it sought peace when there was not, and could
> not be, peace; when her members were neither cold
> nor hot, and imagined that godliness is for earthly
> gain and profit. The single-hearted truth that
> should have conquered her cunning opponents was
> wrapped in duplicity and could deal no telling
> blows...[3]

The things said in the paragraph are all true, and they
are good proof. But the proof is weakened by the use of dif-
ficult words. Such expressions as: "exchanged for prudent
policies," "bargaining in diplomatic compromises," and "wrap-
ped in duplicity" weaken proof instead of strengthening it.
In the mind of the speaker the arguments presented are cogent.
But in the minds of the hearers proof is not so strong.

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3. Dau, op. cit., p. 29.

CHAPTER VII

COMMUNICATION

In order to communicate we must convey thoughts. Words are the symbols used for this purpose. "To understand our language, the person to whom we speak must agree with us that certain symbols stand for certain experiences." [1] Unless both the speaker and the hearer are agreed that a certain word means a certain thing, that word is useless for conveying thoughts.

The more definite a symbol is the more useful it will be to convey thought and also to persuade. "So much of the misunderstanding that goes on among men and women is due to the lack of definiteness of some of the symbols." [2] In order to obviate this difficulty the professions have invented technical terms, which in a compact manner convey definite thoughts. Such technical terms are useful in communicating with another member of one's profession. But these terms dare not be used with the layman because he is not familiar with the experiences for which they stand. "We communicate with others only when we stir up the experience for which the symbol stands. Therefore, in order to communicate with

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1. Lionel Crocker, _Public Speaking for College Students,_ p. 249.
2. _Ibid._

others we must use the terms the audience understands."3

Golladay gives us a good example of effective communication, as he describes faith:

> Faith is just walking with God, as the child walks with a parent; it is enjoying the Father's company, leaning on the Father's arm, listening to the Father's counsel, joyously running the Father's errands. This is faith, this is spiritual life, which two things, in the final analysis, are practically one. 4

What a beautiful and simple way of describing faith. There are no words in this paragraph that cause a hearer to turn away because he can not understand them. This is an example of good communication, using the terminology of the hearers to describe an abstract thing in such a way that everyone can grasp it.

In describing God, Golladay does not succeed in communicating effectively:

> On the part of man universally these thoughts about the primary phenomena of the universe, and human life as the most significant part of the visible universe, lead to one universal deduction: back of the visible there is something not tangibly revealed; back of the things made there is a Maker; back of life there is a Life-giver; back of all discernible movement there is a Mover; back of all the beauty there is an Artist. And all the world has united in calling this wise master-builder, this almighty ruler - God. 5

If the first half of this paragraph had been omitted, it could be said without reservation that the paragraph lends itself to good communication. Such phrases as: "primary

3. Crocker, op. cit., p. 249.
4. Golladay, op. cit., p. 42.
5. Ibid., p. 52.

phenomena," "universal deduction," and "tangibly revealed," do not make for good communication. The average layman does not think with these phrases. They are to him symbols that convey little meaning. The last half of the paragraph is easily understood and appreciated.

Again Golladay forgets what good communication means as he shows how nature proves the existence of God:

> But if he lifts his eyes to the starlit heavens, and realizes that this earth, solid and big as it seems, is but a mote which floats through space peopled with innumerable worlds; and if, from this teeming universe, he goes back and looks out into the void, which was the pregnant womb of time, and out of which vacuity there came these teeming systems which form the one complete system; oh, then, - language fails as an adequate vehicle for expressing the overwhelming sense of infinitude borne to the soul by the magnitude and variety and complexity of the universe. [6]

For the scholar or the philosopher this paragraph would have meaning, and for them it would be good communication. But the average people are not accustomed to thinking with philosophical abstractions and fanciful figures of speech. For them such expressions as: "innumerable worlds," "teeming universe," "womb of time," "vacuity," and "infinitude" are not meaningful symbols.

In a paragraph on Christian faith Golladay has good communication:

> The content of Christian faith, reduced to its simplest terms, is Jesus Christ as the all-sufficient Savior. It is written that God justifies

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6. Ibid., pp. 66-67.

those who have faith in Jesus (Rom. 3, 26). When
one knows himself to be a poor lost sinner, de-
plores and confesses it; and recognizes Jesus
Christ as the only Savior from sin, and with the
confidence of his heart, weak and trembling though
it be, reaches out to lay hold of Jesus as his
Savior, that man has faith; God receives that man,
forgives him, justifies him, makes him an heir of
all His spiritual blessings. [7]

This is a paragraph very useful for communication. In
the first part, the word "justifies" is used without ex-
plaining it, but later on in the paragraph it is explained.
The symbols used in this paragraph to convey thoughts, are
good. They are words used by people in ordinary conversation.

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7. Ibid., p. 47.

A. Beauty of thought is more useful for creating emotion
   than beauty of words.
B. The true dignity of the pulpit has emotional value.
   1. The dignity of the pulpit does not result from
      using technical language.
   2. It does result from presenting grand truths in a
      simple manner.
C. An active imagination on the part of the speaker is a
   help to emotion.
   1. Suggestive words stir the imagination and call up
      associated meanings.
   2. The use of simple, pictorial words stirs the emotions.
D. The things which interest the hearers will stir their
   emotions.

CHAPTER I
BEAUTY OF THOUGHT

Among the things that appeal to the emotions of the
hearers is beauty. True beauty is beauty of thought rather
than the use of big, high-sounding words. Polysyllabic words
do not in themselves make for beauty. Using many words,
especially descriptive adjectives, is not the essence of
beauty of expression. Unless the thoughts that are to be
expressed are in themselves great and grand, they cannot be
elegantly expressed. When beauty is sought primarily in
words rather than in thoughts, beautiful language becomes an
end in itself and serves to obscure thought.

Quintilian has a fine paragraph on this subject:

> Beauty of language ought not to be regarded as
> an end in itself. However desirable such beauty
> may be, when associated with clearness and gran-
> deur of thought, and when it naturally follows the
> orator's conceptions, to seek for it as a distinct
> object will ensure a failure as to the orator's
> legitimate end. Not words, but things, deserve our
> chief solicitude. Besides, the most valuable thoughts
> in a discourse are such as are recommended by their
> simplicity and naturalness. Ought we to be dissat-
> isfied with a strictly correct expression of our
> thoughts because it does not seem learned, or be-
> cause any other person might employ it?...Cicero
> himself cautions us against departing from the ordi-
> nary modes of speech. Such a proceeding in an
> orator he condemns as one of the greatest rhetor-
> ical faults. [1]

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1. Quintilian quoted by Th. Graebner in The Expository
Preacher, p. 121.

When the words used in expression are closely corre-
lated with the thoughts behind them so that those thoughts
are expressed in a simple manner, the result is true beauty
of expression. There must be a "close fit between your
meaning and your phrases." [2] When words accurately convey
beautiful thoughts from the mind of the speaker to the mind
of the hearer there is beauty of expression. Beauty of ex-
pression depends first of all upon beauty of thought.

Simplicity is the keynote for beauty. The speaker can-
not be said to have beauty of expression unless this beauty
exists for his hearers. Shedd shows how elegant language
aids simplicity of expression:

> Elegant is from e and lego. Elegance is a
> nice choice. The elegant is the select. Out of
> a multitude of particulars the most fitting is
> chosen. Under the influence of that principle
> and idea of unity, of which we have spoken, the
> orator selects the most appropriate word, the word
> which promotes the simplicity of the statement,
> and thus his diction is elegant. Or, under the
> influence of this same idea of unity he culls the
> most suitable metaphor out of a multitude, and
> thus his illustration is elegant. [3]

Reigstad fails to achieve beauty in describing the Gospel:

> The Gospel bears certain distinguishing marks,
> and they are the same wherever you find them. They
> are these: propitiation, pardon, and purity.
> Isaiah's concept of propitiation is clearly set
> forth in the Fifty-third chapter of the book which
> bears his name. The principle of the substitu-
> tionary sacrifice is asserted there. Pardon and
> purity are the gifts proclaimed in this chapter. [4]

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2. Brown, op. cit., p. 183.
3. Shedd quoted by Th. Graebner in The Expository
Preacher, pp. 120-121.
4. Reigstad, op. cit., p. 106.

For the average layman there is no beauty in the word
propitiation. The idea behind the word is beautiful, and
if beautifully expressed in a simple way, would be effec-
tive in moving the hearer. Words that are not meaningful
to the hearer can have no connotation of beauty for him.

Reigstad has a beautiful paragraph on the resurrection:

> I know that Christ lives because He lives in
> me. A faith such as that cannot put us to shame.
> We place our hands upon our hearts and say, I know
> He lives because He is there. Christ lives in me
> because He guides and rules my thoughts, my words,
> my deeds, and He gives me strength to take up the
> cross and follow Him. 5

This paragraph is beautiful because beautiful thoughts
are expressed in simple, chaste language. The words used do
not impress us with their elegance. But the thoughts con-
veyed by these words are elegant. They move us and strike
a sympathetic chord in our own hearts.

Reigstad brings out the beauty of God's grace:

> Thank God, man's thirst can be quenched.
> There is a true source of satisfaction, and those
> fountains flow freely. God's grace is sufficient
> to meet all our needs, and the living waters from
> the throne of God can quench our nameless thirst.
> Nothing the world can give is proportionate to our
> need, for the soul of man cannot be fed on husks. 6

With simple words and beautiful thoughts the speaker
produces beauty of expression. Man's need for God's grace
is beautifully described as a thirst. The source of grace

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5. _Ibid._, pp. 73-74.
6. _Ibid._, p. 112.

is pictured as a fountain that flows continually. The source of this fountain is the throne of God. The water that comes from this fountain is living water. There is beauty in these pictures and these thoughts.

Golladay loses beauty in describing the work of Christ:

> I believe that Jesus Christ is the second person in the family of the Godhead; that He was eternally begotten of the Father, and in the fullness of time became a man for our redemption. I believe that by the active obedience of the life, and the passive obedience of the death, of this God-man every child of Adam's lost race has been redeemed; and that salvation is assured for every one who comes as a needy sinner, and clings to Jesus Christ by a living, appropriating faith. [7]

The beauty of the thoughts expressed in this paragraph would have been enhanced if they had been expressed more simply. Such technical terms as: "active obedience," "passive obedience," and "appropriating faith," should have given way to simpler expressions, in order to make the speaker's words more beautiful to the hearers.

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7. Golladay, op. cit., p. 62.

CHAPTER II
TRUE DIGNITY

True dignity in speech does have emotional value. But
this is not the dignity that comes from the use of big words
and high-flown phrases. Especially in the preaching minis-
try there exists such a false sense of dignity based on
wrong premises. The dignity of the pulpit does not lie in
the preacher's moral qualities, in his personal sanctity,
in his zeal, nor in the elevated language that he uses. The
true dignity of the pulpit lies in the glory and grandeur
of the truths he presents, in the solemnity of his duties,
and in the infinite issues depending on how the truth is
received and presented. Keeping these things in mind it
will not be hard to appreciate the fact that simple language
is more conducive to true dignity than technical language.

Burrell suggests why preachers do not use simple words:

> It sometimes happens that plainness in the
> pulpit is hindered through an erroneous idea of
> what is due to his dignity. This leads some
> preachers not only to speak in an artificial tone
> of voice, but to make use of circumlocutions for
> the very purpose of avoiding plain terms. Prob-
> ably this habit arises from unconscious unwilling-
> ness on the part of the preacher to come into near
> mental contact with the people - a grievous error
> since such closeness of mental contact is one of
> the chief aids to spiritual impression. In other
> circumstances the use of unusual words is a

wretched piece of pedantry, a device if the preacher's
for showing off the superiority of his training. 1

Just as true beauty of expression is based on beauty of
thought, so also genuine dignity of expression can result
only from grand and important thoughts. To clothe such
thoughts in polysyllabic terms and unnecessary modifiers is
to detract from their dignity by implying that they need
bolstering. The less the words used to clothe thoughts
stand in the way of those thoughts, the more will their true
dignity become apparent.

> There is a conflict between the demand for
> the exalted and the demand for the simple, and
> as long as we hold to the opinion that elegance
> and beauty may best be had by using the choice
> words, we shall not be simple. The simple style
> comes from the love of the common words, the
> keen desire to use them, and the lasting effort
> to use them well. 2

Golladay, stating what man would be if God had not
created him, loses dignity by trying to achieve it with big
words:

> Then the masterly achievements of the human
> mind, the tender emotions of the human heart, the
> vaulting aspirations of the human soul, the longing
> for immortality, these are all but the unexplain-
> able fatuous dreams of a bundle of atoms in fortui-
> tous concourse. Then this vitalized mechanism of
> human life, the world's greatest unsolved puzzle,
> when it has run down, and worn out, and the magic
> bond of unity is severed, returns to the sphere of
> non-vitalized dust. 3

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1. David James Burrell, The Sermon, Its Construction
and Delivery, pp. 53-54.
  2. Black, op. cit., p. 130.
  3. Golladay, op. cit., p. 75.

Merely the sounds of words will not serve to convey true dignity. There must be thoughts conveyed before the hearer becomes aware of the impact of a grand truth. Such words as: "fatuous," "fortuitous," "concourse," and "non-vitalized," detract from true dignity because they are not understood by the average layman.

Matzner has dignity in his presentation of man's helplessness:

> In other words, the kingdom of God comes from above. And what does that mean? It means that, when man had sinned, there was absolutely no hope for him until God prepared a way of saving sinners. It means that there was absolutely no hope that any man would ever rise who would be able to cope with the desperate situation here on earth - until God sent His Savior from heaven, His only Son. It means that none of us either in this land or in a heathen land can ever find Christ and His salvation, or pray in a manner so that our prayers reach the throne of God, or do anything that is really pleasing to God - unless God regenerates us with a power not of this earth and saves us by His grace. 4

The awefulness of the thoughts in this paragraph make for dignity. The helplessness and hopelessness of man, as far as saving himself is concerned, is the thought that lends dignity to the paragraph. The fact that the great God deigns to save man is a grand and dignified thought. These thoughts are not obscured, but rather reinforced by the simple language used to express them. These are no circumlocutions, no pompous phrases to clutter up the dignity of the thoughts expressed.

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4. Emil W. Matzner, <u>To Live Is Christ</u>, pp. 15-16.

Reigstad seems to have a false sense of dignity in describing Christ's universal kingship:

> Powers unlimited were vested in Him, so that He reigned ad infinitum. Every planet in the vast created system, every star, every constellation, every galaxy of created things reaching out into the peripheral limits of eternity, was obedient to His beck and call. [5]

To use foreign words among the average people might be due to a false sense of dignity. Other abstract expressions are used which do not lend dignity to the paragraph. By using these terms the true dignity of the thoughts expressed, is toned down.

Maier achieves dignity as he talks about sin:

> Others turn a deaf ear to Christ because they love sin. They do not wish to be disturbed in their secret affairs or favorite vices. But they know that if they come to Christ, these must be renounced. They are making money in sinful occupations, finding pleasure in breaking God's law of purity. They derive too much sensual satisfaction from following their own lusts to heed the Savior's call for repentance and faith. So they pass Jesus and heedlessly turn their faces from the only Savior they can ever have. [6]

It certainly is not big words in this paragraph, that lend dignity. It is rather the terrible truth of the facts presented that impresses us in a solemn way. By using words that the average man can understand, the speaker makes the dignity of the thoughts all the more outstanding.

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5. Reigstad, op. cit., p. 44.
6. Maier, op. cit., p. 7.

CHAPTER III
IMAGINATION

Imagination, properly used, is useful for stirring the emotions. The average person thinks mostly in terms of pictures, images. Language that is abstract does not appeal.

Pictorial language may be achieved by using pictorial words "which express a visible motion or emotion such as 'hobbling progress.'" [1] Abstract ideas such as "progress," become concrete when described in a pictorial way.

Imaginative words not only denote meaning, but they also connote. They suggest more than they say.

> Suggestiveness means the power of words to stir the imagination. Suggestive words not only communicate precise meanings but also call up associated meanings. Consider the different connotations of the words "house" and "home," and of the words "lady" and "mother." [2]

There are certain words that mean much because there are many pleasant associations connected with them. The word "home" stands for something pleasant, agreeable, and comfortable.

Words also stir up the imagination when the sound suggests the sense. Poe's poem, "The Bells," is an example of using sound to suggest the sense.

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1. Booth, op. cit., p. 116.
2. Sarett and Foster, op. cit., p. 535.

Figures of speech are the most common devices for
making language pictorial. Some of these are: simile,
metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, personification, and apos-
trophe. The Old Testament of the Bible is particularly rich
in figures of speech, and is for that reason appealing even
to children.

> The whole matter may be summed up as an
> appeal to the imagination by couching ideas in
> images, examples, comparisons, anecdotes, etc.,
> within the experience of both the speaker and the
> hearers. May I digress for a moment, at this
> point, to say that there is a popular conception
> that the imagination is freakish, capricious,
> whimsical, and abnormal? This is not correct
> Such a conception confuses imagination with fancy.
> On the contrary, the imagination is normal, serious,
> and truthful. It is based upon actual impressions
> derived from reality. [3]

In order to be effective, the imagery used must be taken
from the experience of both the hearer and the speaker. In
other words, it must be familiar. It would not do for a
pastor to use illustrations from city life ifhis hearers
were unacquainted with urban conditions.

Not only must the imagery be taken from the experience
of the hearers, bt also the wordsused to describe that
imagery, must be taken from the experience of the hearer.
Painting a beautiful picture in words that are not meaningful
to the audience, would defeat its own purpose.

Schramm uses imagination in describing Jesus' words on
the cross:

> In the light of the seven words spoken from

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3. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 120.

the cross we catch seven wondrous glimpses of
the centrality of the cross. These seven words
are seven beacon lights, shining out into the world
of men, shining up into the abode of God. And
wherever these seven words shine, they reveal the
cross at the very center of things. [4]

By describing Jesus' words as lights the speaker fur-
nishes the hearer with handles with which to cling to the
idea of what these words do. The words of Jesus are like
spotlights trained on the cross. The picture brings out the
importance of Jesus' death. This picture would have been ob-
scured had the speaker used difficult language.

Baer lacks imagination in his discussion of justification:

There are persons who think that this declar-
ation of approval by Christ to the lawyer's answer
is inconsistent with the doctrine of justification
by faith and Paul's affirmation that "By the deeds
of the law there shall no flesh be justified." The
perfect fulfilling of God's law will win His favor,
but who has ever given God perfect obedience? "All
have sinned and come short of the glory of God,"
and therefore all are under condemnation and need
the gracious salvation offered by Christ, who in
His incarnation and sacrifice upon the cross kept
the whole will and law of God. [5]

The paragraph is abstract rather than concrete. There
are no pictorial words. The speaker did not use imagination.
The ideas are still more obscured by his using technical
words and phrases.

Lenski succeeds in suggesting the sense with the sound,
as he describes the life of man, "Our human life here below,

4. Schramm, op. cit., p. 63.
5. Baer, op. cit., pp. 49-50.

after all, is not simply a fitful dream, a convulsive sob, a gasp, and then the falling of the clods upon some coffin lid."[6] The effect is heightened by the use of simple words. In the same way Lenski uses a picture to describe death, "What of that last grim disturber of our human plans, the angel called Death, who insists on hanging his crepe on every door?"[7]

Dau might have effectually used imagination in describing the Trinity:

> From these words of Jesus the mystery of the Holy Trinity looks out at us: God the son is here speaking to God the Father. The supernatural relationship existing between these two distinct persons and, as other texts of Scripture show with equal clearness, existing also between these two persons and the Holy Spirit, baffles our inquiring reason.[8]

The abstract words used do not furnish a good picture. A few illustrations might have been used to present in a more vivid way the idea of the Holy Trinity.

Schramm gives us a vivid picture of the terribleness of sin:

> A British sergeant who served in the Somme sector in the World War said that through those long months when the two battle-lines kept up their continuous exchange of shells, he could not get away from the feeling that Christ was out between the lines and that the shot was passing through His body.[9]

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6. Lenski, op. cit., pp. 7-8.
7. Ibid., p. 10.
8. Dau, op. cit., p. 13.
9. Schramm, op. cit., p. 64.

CHAPTER IV

HUMAN INTEREST

People are self-centered. They are interested in what concerns them. The more vitally a matter affects them the more interested will they be in it. In the same manner people will be interested in things that occur frequently in their own experience.

> The conclusion of the matter is, that the speaker, in order to secure the interest of his listeners, must present ideas adjusted to their experience. What constitutes the experience of an individual? Someone has summed it up well as follows, "All that he retains from what he has seen, heard, read, done, and felt." [1]

Seven factors of interestingness are: the antagonistic, the animate, the concrete, the similar, the unusual, the uncertain, and the vital. It is ture that a preacher chooses his subject matter from the Bible, not from the lives of people. But the Bible must be linked up with the lives of the people. The preacher should capitalize on their interest by showing how the Bible gives them what they are interested in.

In order to move and interest people, it is not enough to talk about things that interest them. Interesting matters must be presented in simple language in order to be effective. "The speaker must seek to bring His ideas and language within

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1. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 45.

the vivid experience of those who constitute his audience,
if he would interest them."[2] This pertains not only to the
subject matter, but also to the language used.

Geiseman has human interest in his discussion of prayer:

> God wants us to come to Him with all the
> things of life. We have no problems so great or
> so small, but what He is eager to hear of them and
> to help us in finding a solution for them. When
> we are young and students at school, He wants us
> to come to Him and ask of Him those things that are
> necessary for the cultivation of our souls, the
> development of our minds, the strengthening of our
> bodies, the equipment of ourselves so that we may
> be able competently and successfully to face the
> battles of life.[3]

People are interested in the things they need for
success. Students at school are no exceptions. They are
interested in knowing that God will supply their every need.
The needs of the student are expressed in simple language.

Geiseman talks about sin in an interesting way:

> When individuals try to ignore the things of
> their souls, they can only make themselves the more
> desperately miserable and unhappy by doing so. I
> have known persons in my ministry who have made
> themselves sick, have called in doctors and nurses
> and specialists and swallowed pills and medicine
> all in the hope of trying to find an answer to their
> problem without getting rid of sin, but it was all
> in vain. It was not until they accepted Jesus that
> they came to be free in spirit, that they were no
> longer in need of doctors and medicine, for now
> they had found inner spiritual life which allowed
> them to be happy and at peace.[4]

All people are interested in sin because all people
know that they do wrong and that they are guilty. In this

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2. Ibid., p. 45.
3. Geiseman, op. cit., p. 19.
4. Ibid., pp. 63-64.

paragraph man's foremost need is presented in a concrete and realistic manner. Simple language helps to make the presentation interesting by making it easy to follow.

Reigstad lacks human interest value in discussing the Gospel:

> The Gospel bears certain distinguishing marks, and they are the same wherever you find them. They are these: propitiation, pardon, and purity. Isaiah's concept of propitiation is clearly set forth in the Fifty-third chapter of the book which bears his name. The principle of the substitutionary sacrifice is asserted there. Pardon and purity are the gifts proclaimed in this chapter.[5]

Although this paragraph treats a subject of universal interest, how one can get rid of sin, yet the average person would not be much moved by it because the use of technical terms and phrases detracts from its human interest.

Lenski has an interesting clause, "...a Gospel that is a never failing fountain of lifeand hope for weary souls..."[6] A message like this, that supplies the greatest need of men, expressed in simple language, will interest people.

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5. Reigstad, op. cit., p. 106.
6. Lenski, op. cit., p. 6.

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