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THE APPROACH TO THE UNCHURCHED

**A Thesis Presented to
The Faculty of Concordia Seminary
Department of Practical Theology**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Divinity**

**by
Earl Schmiessing
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THE APPROACH TO THE UNCHURCHED

(Outline)

- I. Obligations to the Unchurched.
 - A. We Have the Word of Reconciliation. 1.
 - B. Christ Has Commissioned Us to Preach It to All Men. 3.
 - C. We Must Preach the True Gospel. 5.
 - D. We Must Preach to the Entire World. 7.
 - E. Each Christian Has Christ's Commission. 8.
 - F. Opportunities Are Responsibilities to God. . . 10.
- II. The Unchurched and the Gospel.
 - A. The General Irreligious Spirit of Our Age. . . 14.
 - B. The Modern Revolt Against Authority. 16.
 - C. Sin Prejudices Unchurched Toward the Gospel. . 17.
 - D. Materialistic Empiricism Obscures the Gospel . 18.
 - E. Secular Competition. 19.
 - F. The Approach to 20th Century Man. 20.
 - G. Unchurched Must Be Approached in Love. 24.
- III. The Approach in Personal Evangelism.
 - A. The Church Must Go to the Unchurched. 29.
 - B. The Marks of a True Evangelist. 31.
 - C. The Evangelist's Resources. 40.
 - D. The Importance of Personal Evangelism. 45.
 - E. Evangelistic Methods. 46.
- IV. The Approach Through Lay Evangelism.
 - A. Centralization of Authority Brings Centralization of Responsibility. 54.

B. Laymen Are the Foremost Resource of the Church.	57.
C. Specific Opportunities Present Specific Responsibilities.	60.
D. Lay Evangelism Presupposed Adult Instruction.	62.
E. By-Products of Lay Evangelism.	64.
V. The Approach in Preaching.	
A. Good Preaching Will Draw the Unchurched.	68.
B. Preaching to the Unchurched Must Be Law and Gospel.	68.
C. The Minister as a Channel of Communication.	73.
D. The Sermon Must Be Dynamic, Goal-controlled.	73.
E. The Plan Should Recognize Modern Tastes.	75.
F. There Is No Real Teaching Without Interest.	78.
G. Elements of Interest for the Unchurched.	79.
H. The Place of Sympathy in Preaching.	88.
I. The Importance of Brevity.	88.
J. A Good Sermon Deserves a Good Delivery.	90.
VI. The Approach in Christian Education.	
A. The Opportunity of the Church.	93.
B. The Need for Christian Education Apparent.	94.
C. Value of Christian Training Recognized by the Unchurched.	96.
D. Children Can Be Missionaries.	97.
VII. The Success of the Work.	
A. The Success Rests With God.	99.
B. God Will Give Success to His Church.	100.

I. OBLIGATION TO THE UNCHURCHED

If God really sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to be the Savior of all men, then the most pressing and urgent task of every Christian is to bring this message to the entire world. It is a Satanic paradox for the Christian who has accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Savior to stand idly by while countless millions of souls about him are heedlessly rushing to eternal perdition. The mission of the Christian church rests upon certain facts clearly taught in the Scriptures. In the first place the mission of the Christian church rests upon the fact that all men are by nature sinners, cut off from God eternally and subject to both temporal and eternal punishment.¹ It takes real courage to face this fact. This is a gloomy fact. The non-Christian world has generally tried to gloss over this fact by

1. Romans 5,12

denial and facetious ridicule. It denies that there is any such thing as right and wrong--that there is any reality to sin--and it speaks light headedly in its confident assertions that it "knows that there is no such thing as hell."

The point which is of interest to the Christian missionary is this: that these anti-Scriptural viewpoints which are held in some form or other by the vast majority of the non-Christian world, may tend to temper his own thinking. The danger is that the Christian himself may no longer appreciate the seriousness of the situation. Many of these non-Christians are fine people--nice congenial, friendly, intelligent people. It's hard for a Christian to realize that his fine respectable unbelieving friend is actually under the wrath and condemnation of God. On this point, however, there should be no uncertainty, for Scripture speaks plainly, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned,"² and again, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."³ The Christian should be completely clear on this, that as sure as Christ's own word is

2. Mark 16, 15

3. John 3, 36

true, there is but one Name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

In the second place, it must be perfectly clear that the destiny of man is an Eternal Destiny and that the message which the Church has for the world is a message for eternity. In late years much stress has been laid upon the fact that Christianity has a very definite message for the present earthly life. This is most certainly true. Christian life is the happiest and the most successful life of all. The church definitely does have a message for the social ills of the day. The danger is that the message for this world usurps a place not its own. Social issues have their urgency, but it is an urgency which many Christians may well feel that they can avoid. When the accent of the Church's mission is temporal, mission zeal and enterprise fall off. In the mind of the Christian evangelist there must be no uncertainty with regard to this: The Gospel is the message for eternity.

The Christian church is founded upon the Savior's Great Commission, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded

you, and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."⁴ On this commission the Church is built. This is her purpose in the world, to preach the Gospel of Christ. For this purpose churches are built, seminaries founded, faculties chosen. For this purpose Christian Day Schools are operated, Sunday Schools organized. Men's Clubs, Ladies Groups, Young People's Societies, all have existence for one stellar purpose--to teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

It may be thought that these points are so self-evident that they scarcely deserve mention here. The fact is, however, that the Christian church has realized her objective in a limited manner only. Her ultimate purpose has often been obscured behind secondary purposes. All too often the activities of the church have centered back upon herself rather than upon the non-Christian world. The spirit of indifference to eternal truth which characterizes our present generation seems to have invaded the Church as well. Individual Christians abound who give assent to the Scriptural truths that man without Christ is eternally lost, but the question is in point, "Does he really believe it?" Does he believe it to the extent that he is willing to do

4. Matthew 28, 18ff.

something about it? Robert Ingersoll, the noted infidel, stated that he couldn't understand how Christians could really believe that unbelievers were bound for hell, and at the same time do little or nothing to help them. He said that if he believed that men without Christ were lost eternally, he would be out on the street corner trying to persuade every non-Christian to believe in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Bob Ingersoll was Bob Ingersoll, but what he says has bearing upon the point under discussion. Surely the church has become susceptible to a degree of indifference and apathy which is akin to the world's wishful thinking that "maybe after all it isn't so." If the church is to experience a real revival of evangelistic effort, it must first reassert itself on these basic tenets of the Christian faith.

Many church bodies in the United States have within the last decades particularly made the burden of their message the betterment of social conditions. This is commonly referred to as the "Social Gospel." Nothing should be clearer to the true Christian than that the church which substitutes a human purpose in place of its God given purpose has lost its character as a truly Christian church. These churches no longer teach the facts of sin and grace and therefore are

not really Christian churches. What these groups have lost in substance, they have very often attempted to make through technique. Lack of substance always makes great demands upon technique, whether in art, music and painting, or in religion. Likewise the emphasis on technique frequently operated to the detriment and neglect of substance. For instance, when the minister's oratory is poor, he must have a real message or he cannot hold his people. When he has no message, he must be expert in the techniques of delivery or he will not hold the interest of people. When a man's oratory is good to start with, he may tend to rely on his natural eloquence to see him through many a sermon whose message is trivial, inconsequential, irrelevant and quite dull.

As before stated, some church bodies have lost the substance of the Christian faith, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. These churches have not passed out of existence. They have held their members, because many of these pastors, perhaps unconsciously sensing the poverty of the message in its bald form, have applied the ultimate in technique in order to present their general moralizations in the most concrete and vivid manner.

The Christian church today should beware of any

tendency which might shift the emphasis of its message from the central truths of man's sin and God's grace. At the same time it is perhaps possible that some of the human techniques which have served modernist churches so well can be adapted to serve the cause of the true Christian church. The fact that the message has substance does not preclude the use of vivid presentation, striking illustration and a systematic approach. The effective Gospel preacher must be constantly on the alert to portray Jesus Christ as He is in truth, the Son of God and the Savior of the world, and to do this in the most forceful and effective manner at his disposal.

Another basic fact for the Christian evangelist to bear in mind is that the Great Commission directs him to the entire world. As long as the matter remains in the abstract, there is no difficulty here, but when it is brought down to concrete cases, the prospect becomes staggering. Christ gives the marching orders to every Christian, "Teach all nations." That means all people--those near and those far away, the rich and the poor, strangers and relatives, the white race and the colored races, the socially prominent and the social delinquent. Today, after almost 2000 years, the vast majority of the world's peoples are still without the Gospel of their Savior.

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This is a terrible indictment of the lovelessness and indifference of Christians who have failed to bring the Gospel to these perishing souls. The sight of so many million souls in need of the Gospel which we can bring to them may tend to bring with it a defeatist attitude. The task is so stupendous that one hesitates to face it. The Christian's eyes all too easily turn aside from this vast vineyard. That is why it is ever necessary that the Savior Himself direct our eyes squarely toward this work. He includes all nations. No person is to be overlooked--the man or woman who lives in the same building with us, the business associate, the school chum, the men who sell us our gasoline or groceries. In them the Christian is to see not merely casual acquaintances, but immortal souls who need to know their Savior.

The Great Commission is furthermore directed to every Christian. It was never intended that the preaching and teaching should be done by pastors and teachers alone. Christ has laid the responsibility on each and every individual Christian. Wherever a Christian has an opportunity to preach the Gospel to some soul, the voice of Christ bids him to do so. It must be re-emphasized that every Christian, regardless of his earthly state, is urgently commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ to teach the Gospel to every

creature. The point which must be crystal clear is that every Christian has a responsibility commensurate with the degree that he has opportunity to bring the Gospel to others. If, for instance, a Christian business man has unchurched business associates, he has there an opportunity to bring them to Jesus. If he does not bring them to Jesus, he had better have a good explanation to the Lord as to why he has not done so. Such an explanation may exist. There are at times failures when an unbeliever stubbornly resists all overtures to bring him to the Savior. If a Christian can honestly stand before his Lord and say, "Lord, I have tried every resource at my command, but he still will not follow Thee," then he is fulfilling his obligation. The Lord Jesus Himself did not win all those whom He contacted. Among those who came to hear Him was a rich young ruler who went away sorrowful.⁵ When Jesus proclaimed that He was the Son of God many who had come to hear Him left and followed Him no more.⁶ Among His chosen twelve disciples, one was a devil.⁷ There will always be those who reject the Gospel of Christ, in spite of all efforts made to win them. The Lord Jesus experienced this and His followers should not be surprised when they do not in all cases imme-

5. Matthew 19,22

6. John 6,66

7. John 6,70

diately succeed in bringing the lost soul to its Savior.

The proper conception of mission obligation is fundamental for work in the church. This conception demands that the individual Christian, pastor or layman, realize that the Lord is expecting from him service commensurate with his opportunities. If a Christian has an opportunity to bring someone to the knowledge of his Savior and shirks that opportunity, he has committed a grave sin of omission. Generally little criticism is offered for sins of omission. Sins of commission strike the eye and elicit attention to a larger degree than sins of omission. Before God, however, there is no difference, for underlying both is a loveless heart. The neglect of mission opportunities is often symptomatic of a loveless, self-centered personality. The Christian who has the opportunity to bring salvation to a perishing soul, and yet neglects to do so, is guilty of a terrible sin before the Lord, for in His last words before ascending into heaven the Lord stressed this as the duty of every Christian. It is significant that Jesus did not give as His parting instruction, "Don't steal, don't murder, don't commit adultery, don't bear false witness." All these commands are important, but the real test of love for Him remains this, "Have we

carried out His last commission?" That is His foremost command to those who are His own. Results are not our responsibility. Ours is the responsibility to preach the Gospel. Woe be unto us if we preach not the Gospel!

The church as an organization must be interested in the unchurched. This sounds self-evident and trite, but again the consideration is one of proper emphasis. In the mission fields of the church, the accent is self-evidently upon the unchurched men and women of the community. But after a church has become quite large, it easily happens that the interests of the congregation tend to center back upon itself. The church is "large enough." The faithful following amply supports it. The activities become so numerous that the pastor has scarcely time left for attention to the unchurched. The services are well attended by the majority of the regular members and everything appears quite rosy. The fact remains that with the activities and attention of the congregation and the pastor centering upon the congregation, the unchurched tend to be overlooked. The unevangelistic congregation is definitely missing the mark, even though it has a thousand members at every morning service and has raised double its quota for outside purposes. That

congregation is missing the mark which ministers Sunday after Sunday to a band of faithful followers, but leaves the great unwashed masses out of the pews. To bring these unchurched masses into the pews will require the individual effort of every layman. Spurgeon recognized this fact. In surveying the large unchurched audiences who had gathered to hear him, he is said to have remarked, "My congregation brought my congregation." A successful program for the church has always included these two elements--a clear, effective presentation of Christian doctrine and an active laity which recognizes its mission responsibilities.

The fundamental principle which underlies this consideration of responsibility toward the unchurched is that each individual Christian is responsible to God for the manner in which he makes use of the opportunities to bring a soul to Christ. The pastor is no exception here. It is generally taken for granted that the pastor has the earnest desire to bring sinners to the Savior. What is not so readily apparent is that a pastor may be failing to make full use of his opportunities. He is the leader of the flock. It is his duty to lead the flock into the work of the Kingdom. It is not enough that he do this in a general way. He has the responsibility for training real lay missionaries. The methods by which he may do

this will be discussed in the chapter on Personal Evangelism. For now it is sufficient to note that the pastor and layman each have their own peculiar mission opportunities. Each opportunity comes with divine responsibility. Each Christian is a soldier in this army of the Lord. For any soldier to refuse to act upon the plain command of his superior is a capital offence. For any Christian to neglect his God-given opportunities by refusing to bring the Word of Life to dying souls is the most shameful of sins. Christ has made His Christians to be His ambassadors. Can he who appreciates what Christ has done for him refuse to carry out the wishes of his King?

II. THE UNCHURCHED AND THE GOSPEL

No program for bringing the Gospel to the unchurched can be complete without understanding just who this man is whom we classify under the title "Unchurched." What kind of man is this non-Christian citizen of the world? What are his interests and his motivations? What is his response to the Gospel of Jesus Christ? We will briefly consider some of the chief facts which should be borne in mind by the evangelist in his approach to the citizen of the 20th century.

In the first place it should be noted that the general spirit of the 20th century is not religious, but secular. For the past seven centuries there has been a gradual shift in the emphasis of our general culture away from the religious toward the secular. Perhaps nowhere can this be seen in a more striking way than in the field of arts. Sorokin shows that during the 12th and 13th centuries 97% of all paintings and sculpture was religious in character. In the 20th century a widespread survey indicates that only 3.9% of the productions are religious, when 96.1% are secular in character.⁸ If these figures

8. Pitirim Sorokin, The Crisis of Our Age, pp.42ff.

are some indication of the change in the interest in things religious, it means that the man of the 20th century is not conditioned for religious discussion to the same extent as the contemporaries of Aquinas and later those of Luther. If the interest in things secular is as great as this brief picture would indicate, then we as evangelists are dealing with an age unlike that of Luther, but not unlike that of the Apostle Paul. For most alert Christians the fact in itself is quite obvious. The interpretation of the fact in terms of proclaiming the Gospel today is yet another matter. Evidence for the religious decadence of our generation is not lacking. Art, drama, the theatre, movies, and novels all debase the religious and glorify the secular. The goal at which these artists aim is not in any sense to impart a religious truth, but merely to amuse, entertain and thrill. To do this it becomes necessary to disregard virtually all religious and ethical values, because they fail to entertain. The contemporary artist who wishes to find a market for eternal values, finds himself confronted with a disinterested clientele. Under this impetus, culture has progressively moved more and more into sensate materialism, and away from eternal considerations. On all sides the onrush of this-worldly entertainment without regard for eternal

values confronts the citizen of our day. Everything religious from God to the devil is ridiculed and distorted. The age revels in such debasement. Popular songs which are unthinkingly sung by masses, center on such themes as: "We kiss, and the angels sing;" "Heaven can wait, this is Paradise;" "The devil with the devil, say I." What is of interest here is that the accent on temporal values and the disregard for eternal values characterizes this age. The question remains as to what plan the evangelist shall use in his approach to the soul so beset by temporal and sensate values.

Another important factor to be considered is the associated revolt of modern man against authority and accountability. Man has been progressively freeing himself from many of the former natural limitations. The doctrine of Henley has incorporated itself quite firmly into the fibre of our generation, "I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my soul". Pseudo-solutions for the nagging problem of accountability are grasped and embraced by the masses today. Henley's statement is representative of the false philosophy which goes hand in hand with that of denying eternal values. Man wants to be rid of responsibility for his actions. The process of ignoring eternal values goes hand in hand with the

process of putting God away. The world wants a God who is afar off, and so it conjures up a disinterested, benevolent deity. God is played down and man is played up. "God isn't what counts. I'm what counts." The theme of a motion picture recently stated, "To thine own self be true, and thou can'st not then be false to any man." The Christian evangelist should realize that underlying this attempt to make man big and God small is the desire to avoid accountability to God. Any denial of God is readily seized upon, whether by implication, irreverent reference or direct denial. The attempt to deny God as Creator of man is typical. Man doesn't want to admit that God made him, because he doesn't like to think of God waiting for him at the other end of the road. Man wants to be accountable only to himself. This is fact number two for the evangelist to bear in mind.

The third consideration is, "Because iniquity shall abound ... the love of many shall wax cold."⁹ We are living in the time of widespread sensuality. Man's craving for happiness has directed itself into sensuous and physical lines. Man is more and more seeking satisfaction in the physical and the temporal. The rapid succession of sensate thrills which our age

9. Matthew 24; 12.

provides, produces the illusion that satisfaction for man's insatiable craving for happiness is to be found in the physical and the temporal. The eternal truths do not fit into this criterion of happiness.

The next consideration is that the citizen of today bases his life upon experience. What he experiences is real. What he has not, or cannot experience is not real. For that reason it is the custom of pseudo-intellectuals to deny all supernatural phenomena. The Biblical doctrines concerning Heaven and Hell, Divine retribution after death, the Deity and Miracles of Christ and all else super-natural is regarded as mere pious superstition, with which gloomy religionists try to make people good, but which does not pay off in terms of present happiness. The Chinese-American philosopher, Lin Yutang, states in his philosophy of life:

Take the most obvious and superficial notion of hell in religion. I think that not one in a hundred college freshmen or seniors today, perhaps not one in a thousand, believes in a literal hell. No one explicitly argues for or against the existence of a literal hell; everyone assumes it is not worth arguing about. And while such notions (hell, sin, origin of evil, punishment, heaven, vicarious suffering) have undergone a profound change-- religion, at least organized religion, must be affected.¹⁰

This statement may well be taken for what it is worth.

10. Lin Yutang, I Believe, Clifton Fadiman, ed., p.162

Certainly it is a bald assertion without proper proof. The fact remains that there is a widespread disbelief in heaven and an even wider disbelief in hell. Because the supernatural has not been "practical", it has dropped away from the attention of the "practical" world, and being forgotten 99% of the time, the supernatural is thought of as being about 99% unimportant. It is to this "practical" world that the Christian evangelist seeks to bring the super-natural, eternal Christ.

It has become evident to a large number of clergymen and evangelists that the practical materialist of today must be approached in a manner quite different from the methods which were used at the time of Calvin and Luther. The approach must be made to the man on his own level. The Lord Jesus, Who was the greatest of all evangelists, practiced that principle. The question with which we will concern ourselves is, "What implications does this have for the teaching of the Gospel?" The tendency of natural man to be interested in the temporal and earthly at the expense of the eternal and heavenly is nothing new. That has always been true. There is a difference, however, in that never before in the history of the world has such a constant succession of temporal interests bombarded the attention, as we see today. From all nooks and corners of life the terrible competition of the im-

mediate temporal necessity screams at the individual for attention. Each temporal concern is advanced as the "Great Necessity" of the moment, whether it be an evening's entertainment at the local cinema or a package of chewing gum. Man today has so consistently been confronted with temporal appeals that his habitual responses naturally look to the temporal for the solution to all his problems. The result has often been that whatever has significance for the temporal engages his interest. What has significance for the Eternal is politely ignored.

Such being the belief of large numbers of churchmen today, it is not strange to see the approach to the unbeliever shift in its emphasis from Eternal truths to Temporal truths. The axiom which has developed is that we must approach the unbeliever in terms of those needs of which he is aware. The corrolary is postulated that the unbeliever has no concern for Eternal values, consequently the approach must be along the lines of temporal interests and concerns.

Bearing in mind that the present world is a far different world than that of Luther and Calvin, it is not strange that the various doctrinal approaches which are suggested today vary somewhat from those of former years. Notable among these new doctrinal approaches are those of Karl Barth,¹¹ and Emil Brunner.¹² James Stewart, in his

11. Karl Barth and Edvard Thurneysen, Come Holy Spirit, p. 8 and passim.

12. Emil Brunner, The Divine Human Encounter, translated by Amandus W. Loos, Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1943.

"Man in Christ," likewise changes the emphasis of doctrine somewhat in stressing the doctrine of reconciliation as the paramount doctrine of Scripture, rather than that of justification by faith. The Christian evangelist must determine accurately in his own mind: "What is the heart of Christian Doctrine?" The general trend today in the presentation of doctrine is to temporalize theology in terms of man's interests. The contention is made that since modern man is little concerned or interested in things Eternal, the approach must be centered on the timely. Often the effort to be timely ends in being centered in the temporal. Such a trend is perceivable in wide sections of the Protestant church in America. No attempt is made at a denial of these facts, but rather it is the conviction of many pastors that theology must be presented with its implications for the timely and the present, or it will not be presented at all. No attempt will be made to deny the value of timely sermons, pertinent to the interests of the hearers. Nevertheless, it is true that at the heart of the Christian message is a message for Eternity. Unless this fact is clearly apprehended, there can be no real Gospel presentation. If Christ's work is for this world only, then many modern men can feel confident that religion has nothing for them. Hewitt mentions the foolishness of allowing the temporal to dominate the Eternal:

The world is a queer old fool. Its head is grooved for one idea at a time. Just as soon as it discovers that righteousness is social, it makes a great hullabaloo about it and forgets how much more deeply it is personal....Three times a year perhaps some villainager may be able to touch great social questions with some little measure of effectiveness. Thirty times a day he will have to face some issue of ethical conduct which is solidly personal....Are you afraid of other-worldliness? Then I don't wonder that your preaching is dust and ashes....Occasionally I meet a man who says with a superomniscient sneer that our business is not with the other world, but only with making a better world here. Only God knows how I despise him. He has seen a little of the truth and by supposing it to be the whole truth, he has made it false as hell....There may be other inducements for skillful living. Eternity is the only safe inducement for right living....All over the prairies and mountains there are newly bereaved hearts which will break tonight, if they cannot believe that

My heavenly home is bright and fair,
No pain nor death can enter there. 13

Orthodox Christians will shy away from any such departure from the heart of the Christian message. An Evangelist may be aware that he must approach the man of today on terms of his temporal interests, but at the same time he must not dwell on the temporal so long that the great Eternal truths are obscured.

Too much emphasis should not be placed on the proposition that man today no longer believes in sin or hell, nor for that matter, that he allegedly no longer believes in heaven. Such a proposition overlooks certain important facts. In the first place, man today as always has the law of God written in his heart. His conscience rises up to accuse him that he is guilty before God. When the

13. Arthur Wentworth Hewitt, Highland Shepherds, p. 114ff.

preacher then teaches him the facts of sin and hell and accountability to God, the man finds in his own heart the very echo to these divine facts. Hell is a reality, and it is a reality in the minds of millions of non-Christians today, who after they have discounted all the undue influence of Dante, find that hell still stands before them, dark, foreboding and real.

Grumm lays particular stress on the function of the conscience in relation to the preaching of the Law.

The preacher must seek to reach the conscience of his hearers with the Word of God which he is preaching. Unless he does, his preaching will not be effective. Conscience is God's deputy in man to enforce His Law. - It is the voice God has placed there prompting us to go the way of God's Law, for sin in man has wiped out so much of this knowledge. It is the purpose, one purpose, of the sermon to bring home to the hearer: "God is speaking to you in this Law. It is His obligation upon you." Once this conviction is rooted in the heart of man, his conscience will be bound to bear witness. It will command and insist that he keep this law. It will tolerate no evasion, accept no excuses, will demand unconditional and full compliance with what now the hearer is convinced is God's will for him.¹⁴

Likewise man realizes that there must be some place after death which is better than hell. Man's deepest and most abiding craving is for happiness. Complete happiness is the very goal for which he was created, and he feels instinctively that he is not achieving that happiness for which he was created. He is missing the existence for which he was intended. Heaven eludes him. Even his

14. Arnold Grumm, The Missionary's Sermon, p. 5.

short-sighted attempts to satisfy his craving for bliss, end in frustration and disappointment. Though such a man realizes that there must be such a place as heaven, yet he is acutely aware of the fact that he may never reach it. Man today may not dwell long on Eternal issues, but that does not warrant the conclusion that he is not concerned about them. Rather it is evidence that he has come to think that the case is hopeless. He is fatalistic with reference to Eternity. Fatalism is the mortal foe of faith. All his thinking about Eternity, heaven and hell have appeared to him utterly fruitless, and for that reason he has simply chosen to avoid an uncomfortable subject. The fact remains that the revelation of God concerning heaven and hell is God's own truth, and if God's truth is preached, the voice of God in the heart, and the divinely implanted conscience will testify that this is indeed the inescapable truth.

The Scriptural doctrines of heaven and hell must be taught in love. The Evangelist warns people of the danger which exists. He never speaks as though hell is a terrible place where Christ-deniers will eventually land, and he is glad of it. Whenever the terrible furies of hell are referred to, the Evangelist must make clear by word and action that he is referring to this uncomfortable fact only because he has the solution for it. A doctor may not tell a patient that he has cancer, if it is incurable,

but if the patient requires a tonsilectomy the doctor will have no hesitancy in telling him so, because the doctor is confident that he has the solution. Likewise the pastor should never minimize the vastness of the gulf between heaven and hell, but he must be sure that he ^{is} leaving no doubt in the mind of the hearer that hell is not intended for him. The Gospel and the work of Christ are essential. Unless it is made completely clear that Jesus paid the complete ransom to redeem every soul from hell to heaven, the sinner will either lapse into despondency at the thought of hell, or develop within himself a defense mechanism against its terrors. Unless the Gospel is made clear the implication is that salvation is by works. Salvation by works never can satisfy the conscience. It leads either to a sense of pride and false security, or to complete despair, with the attendant attempt to deny Eternal retribution. It is possible that a large part of the denial of hell has come about because of wishful thinking. More indirectly, but just as surely, it has come about from preaching hell without love and the Gospel.

Another source of hesitation in the presentation of the Eternal aspects of Christian faith come from the lack of appreciation for God's purpose in creating man. Hell was never prepared for man. The Bible speaks of hell as being prepared for the devil and his angels. Man was not created for hell. God created man for Eternal happiness.

God wanted man to dwell with Him Eternally. Man can never find that happiness in the state of sin and separation from God. The work of Christ makes sense only in terms of this, that it restores to man that Eternal destiny of happiness for which he was created. Man can never find that happiness apart from God. God wants man to have this happiness, and for that reason sent His only Son to reconcile sinful man to Himself.

A rather queer notion has grown up with regard to the work of Christ and the Christian's acceptance of Christ as his personal Savior. It is thought that to accept Christ from a desire to escape hell and enter heaven is "not a very high type of religion." Man's motive in accepting Christ should rather be the desire to be holy, to be with God, rather than away from God. The motive in the latter case appears to be better than in the former. In the former it seems as though the Christian is interested only in saving his own individual hide. This certainly doesn't appear to fit in very well with a pattern of Christian altruism. Such a picture of a man as being interested in Christ from purely selfish motives is not a pretty one. It may be enlightening to make a proper distinction here between the natural man and the converted Christian. The natural man is interested only in saving his own skin. He has implanted in him the insatiable desire for the happiness which only God can give. Hell is the complete

negation of all happiness. Until it has become clear to him that God through Jesus Christ has given him complete happiness Eternally, that the entire purpose of his creation is to be fully realized in the life through Christ, until then a man cannot but be interested first, last and always in himself only. When that realization does come home to him, it plants within him a new spirit--a spirit at one with God. There is nothing cheap or second rate about a man wanting to stay out of hell. In that respect the man's will is in agreement with God's will. God doesn't want man to go to hell either. For this reason the focusing of attention on hell and heaven is by no means to be discouraged on the ground that they simply lay the ground for the "carnal and selfish," desire to accept Christ for personal considerations; fear of hell and anticipation of heaven.

To sum up the argument: The Christian faith and the significance of the work and life of Christ rest upon certain basic facts. To neglect these facts is to distort the significance of Christ's life. These facts are not by any means the only ones which must be stressed and presented. We are to teach all things whatsoever Christ has commanded us. The failure to preach the whole of Christian doctrine must in the end have the effect of distorting and beclouding the Gospel of Jesus. In particular, care should be exercised that the basic tenets of Christian

faith are always made clear. First of all, it should be clear that the Christian Gospel is a Gospel for Eternity, which has implications for every moment in time. The facts of heaven and hell should not be glossed over. Christ definitely taught both. Unless the meaning of Christ's work is an Eternal meaning, it results in nothing more than a moral influence religion. If the Eternal truths are slighted in presentation, and the temporal implications given an inordinate proportion of stress and attention, can it be wondered that the Gospel becomes obscure? If the Eternal Gospel becomes obscure, men will determinedly resist facing the facts of Eternity. Wishful thinking will deny hell and postulate a heaven for all who "do the right thing." It is a vicious circle. On this point there can be no compromise nor uncertainty. It is the minister's supreme privilege and responsibility to put the lives of men and women against the background of Eternity.

III. THE APPROACH TO THE UNCHURCHED IN PERSONAL EVANGELISM

The Unchurched will not come to Christ. Christ must go to the Unchurched. Christian churches are within the reach of virtually every unchurched man and woman in the United States, and yet Sunday after Sunday services are attended by the faithful congregation while the Unchurched go their way, heedless of the church bells pealing out the invitation to come and hear.

It is not to be wondered at that the Non-Christians do not come to church services. The Lord Jesus seems to have had this situation in mind when He gave His great commission. He did not say, "Stay here in Jerusalem and teach. The world will crowd to your doors to hear." The Lord Jesus knows the world better than that. Instead He said in His Great Commission, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations." That is where the work of personal evangelism comes in. In view of the fact that the Unchurched will not of themselves come to the church, the church must go out to meet the Unchurched. Dr. Britz puts his finger on the issue when he states, "A Christian congregation therefore dare not be satisfied to have the Gospel only for itself and for its children, but must preach it also to the unchurched in its own community, in adjacent territory,

in distant parts of the world, even to the uttermost parts of the earth."¹⁵ The pastor should be keenly aware that his marching orders do not instruct him to serve his congregation only, but first of all, his task is to bring the Gospel to all those within his reach. Evans has treated this in a rather unique manner:

It is not enough to be evangelical. We must be evangelistic. The evangelical church is a reservoir of pure water without a pipe running anywhere. If you will take the trouble to look into it and climb the embankment, you will get a good drink. The evangelistic church is a reservoir of pure water with a pipe to every heart in the community, and every nation in the world. Evangelical may mean truth on ice; evangelistic means truth on fire. Evangelical may be bomb-proof for defense; evangelistic means an army on the march with every face towards the enemy.¹⁶

Religious conditions in the United States today present a striking challenge. Statistics commonly report seventy million people in the United States who profess adherence to no church whatever. When we take into consideration that many of those who profess membership in a church are members in name only, and when we consider those people who are members in Non-Christian churches, we can see that the number is much greater. Many churches today do not teach the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. Such churches as the Christian Science, the Church of Latter Day Saints, the Unitarian church, and all modernistic churches whatever their denomination, do not teach the

15. John H. C. Fritz, Pastoral Theology, p. 283.

16. William Evans, Personal Soul Winning, p. 14.

saving Gospel. Members of such churches present as much a challenge for the Christian church as the members of the Hindu or Buddhist temples in India. Both groups are without the Gospel. Both groups are without salvation. To overlook these people as mission prospects under a false and overdrawn guise of religious toleration is to make mockery of the Gospel and the command of our Lord to teach it to all men. Those who are not members of a Christian church are mission material. These the evangelist will find everywhere and will try to bring them to the fold of God's elect through the Gospel.

The next subject for consideration is that of the Evangelist himself. What are the qualifications for an evangelist? The evangelist must first of all love the Lord Jesus Christ. Before Jesus gave the admonition to Peter to "feed my lambs" He first asked Peter, "Lovest thou me?"¹⁷ Love is a pre-condition of discipleship. Love in turn requires faith. The man without faith, the natural man, is enmity against God.¹⁸ The work of evangelism requires courage, but more than this it requires faith. The difficulties, the disappointments which the Christian missionary meets would prove overwhelming were it not that he knows whom he has believed.¹⁹ No man is fit to be an

17. St. John 21; 15.

18. Romans 8; 7.

19. 2 Timothy 1; 12.

evangelist until he is sure of this, that Jesus Christ has redeemed him and made him a son of God and an heir of eternal life.

Second to this primary consideration is that the Gospel messenger must have an absolute conviction of truth, the truth regarding man in his natural state, under the wrath and condemnation of God, the truth of Christ's death and atonement, the truth that man without Christ is lost eternally. If one is not sure that man is lost, he has no reason to try and save him. Doubt in the evangelist begets doubt in the hearer. The evangelist must be clear on the full doctrine of the Law and the full doctrine of the Gospel. In such clear conception lies the strength and purpose of his mission.

The second major qualification for an evangelist is that he must have a love for men. His heart must go out to the man without the Gospel. His dominant mood must be a desire to help. There is no place in personal evangelism for an attitude of casual interest in the unsaved soul. Casual interest belies the very urgency of the Gospel task. The unchurched man must definitely feel, "Here is a man who is interested in me. He is trying for all he is worth to help me. Here is a man who is for me!" Such interest cannot be feigned. The falsity of feigned love is quickly revealed in the harsh, discordant notes which constantly break through any attempt at artificial harmony. Kuntz

speaks of the supreme necessity for a minister to be a man dealing in love.

A friendly minister, endowed with the grace of a natural kindness, is always in an advantageous position. A genuine liking for people, coupled with the effervescence of an irrepressible optimism and a deep faith in the potentialities of people, is a fundamental requirement of the ministry. A life that is so intimately imbued with the Gospel of peace and God's surpassing grace must inevitably betray its gladness in the entire demeanor of that person. A glum and cheerless minister who has no sense of fellow-feeling, and whose concern for, and interest in, every kind of people is not a primary characteristic is a personified contradiction. He will ultimately fail, deservedly so. The story God told him to tell is one of victory and hope and joy. The people whom God wants him to tell it to are the people God loves.²⁰

Perhaps no axiom of basic human psychology could be more stressed than this: To succeed in our relations with our associates love is the sine qua non. It is remarkable how much abuse a man will stand from another both in word and deed, if only he have no doubt about this: "In spite of the roughness and abuse of this man, I know he is for me through and through." It is equally remarkable how small a slight will prove disastrous to the relationship when the underlying conviction is, "He isn't interested in me. He's interested in himself." As soon as a man senses that you aren't really for him heart and soul, your influence with that man is almost nil.

Hand in hand with love must go humility. A man cannot

20. Werner Kuntz, Today, A Journal of Practical Missionary Procedure, Vol. I, Number 1, p. 11.

exalt himself and Jesus Christ at the same time. The work of an evangelist is a work of service. A preacher-centered preacher is no evangelist. The Lord told His disciples, "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your servant."²¹ True humility will come only to the man who stands beneath the cross of his Savior and knows, "It was ~~my~~ sins which crucified the Prince of Life." The spirit will out. Humility will evidence itself in all associations with the Unchurched. The Gospel messenger makes it perfectly clear that he is not pretending in any way to be one whit better than the man with whom he is dealing. Any assumed superiority will prove disastrous. Again, humility must be genuine. Attempts to affect humility will crumble. Personal pride will assert itself, if it has not been crushed at the foot of the cross. It is only the humble Christian who will realize the gloriousness of the privilege he has in bringing the Gospel to men.

The three qualifications mentioned above are the most essential: Love toward God, Love toward men, and Humility. There are however other qualifications which the evangelist should have. He should have a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. The Bible for the Evangelist is not only his professional chest of tools, but it is the source of his own spiritual life. It is the food he eats, the water he drinks, the air he breathes. The Evangelist uses the Bible but more so the Bible uses the Evangelist. Philip found

21. Matthew 20; 26.

the Ethiopian eunuch reading the Scripture. Most of our mission contacts today are not such Bible students. It is of great value to be able to quote texts of Scripture directly, without reference to the Bible itself or to a concordance. To have the Word of God at a moment's notice is a priceless asset. Nothing convinces like the direct quotation from Scripture. Argument is often entirely wasted effort, and discussion may have indifferent results, but the direct Word of God takes hold of the heart. The Word of God is the source of our message. As Lange puts it, "Cut off an army from its base of supplies, and there will be no more victories."²² The Christian evangelist who seeks to bring God's Revelation to men should know that Revelation thoroughly. No one should expect to be a successful evangelist without a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures.

Another qualification for the evangelist is that he have a correct sense of values. The man who fails to appreciate the value of a human soul does not yet understand the Great Commission. The foremost aim of the evangelist will not be honorary degrees, or to be recorded in "Who's Who," but to rescue lost souls. He would prefer the quiet "Thank you" of a grateful few to the plaudits of the mob, and what reward is there which is worth a thought by the approval of God? How does the evangelist avoid such

22. Philip Lange, Approach to the Unchurched, p. 16.

earthly longings? By a deep sense of Eternal values, a sense of values which he has learned not from the glittering world, but from a sober contemplation of the suffering Son of God.

An evangelist should bear witness to his faith by life. The number of silent sermons which are preached to the Unchurched by the lives of Christians could scarcely be counted. Lange treats this subject in an engaging manner:

Our daily conduct should be a constant rebuke to the ungodliness that surrounds us and an exaltation of the grace of God. A pious, God-fearing life commends the Gospel to the unregenerate; on the other hand, there is nothing that makes Christianity more distasteful to the unsaved than the inconsistency of professors. Inconsistent actions are incompatible with Christianity. They make it twice as hard to approach and win the unbelieving, for they help to sear their conscience, fill their mouths with innumerable excuses, and hush the still, small voice of the Spirit in their souls....

The converse is also true. The church member who permits neither rain or shine, neither Sunday company nor desire of ease to prevent his regular weekly pilgrimage to the House of God is preaching a weekly sermon to his churchless neighbors.²³

There is no neutral ground. The evangelist's effectiveness in dealing with the unchurched will depend to a large measure on the standards of conduct which he upholds in all his associations. It should be self-evident that the Christian missionary is a Christian gentleman. No Christian should use his "liberty for a cloak of maliciousness." His very appearance should indicate that he is a

23. Lange, op. cit., p. 19ff.

gentleman of the highest order.

Another requisite for a good evangelist is cheerfulness. The evangelist is the bearer of the best news the world has ever known. It is certainly a paradox for this messenger of salvation to conduct himself in a manner which would indicate that he is a modern Cassandra. It is unfortunately not too uncommon to see a minister looking daggers and death at those for whom he no doubt feels only kindness in his heart. "Some preachers with funereal dolefulness declare their perfect happiness in God."²⁴ A missionary should be a "good mixer," one who can deal with all types of people. For this a calm cheerfulness and sense of good humor is an invaluable asset. Nothing so unlocks the door to the human heart as a friendly, interested smile and a cheerful, spontaneous greeting. The evangelist deals in happiness. Let him look and live the part.

The work of bringing the Gospel to the Unchurched requires persistence. The evangelist will meet hardened sinners who may not immediately respond to his appeals. These hardened sinners may be insulting in their remarks and behavior. The evangelist must never lose his temper. It will be helpful to him if he will realize that behind this display of hostility there is perhaps already the first glimmerings of hope. Some of these "hopeless"

24. Arthur Wentworth Hewitt, Highland Shepherds, p. 103.

cases turn out to be some of the staunchest Christians. Some who in a most hostile and unfriendly manner slam the door in the evangelist's face, later turn out to be the best church members, the most ardent missionaries, and the evangelist's closest friends and supporters. It is not our place to give up any soul as lost until that person is dead. God's Word is powerful and it will not return unto Him void. Sometimes the response may be long in appearing. We should not conclude that the Lord is powerless. Our responsibility remains to testify to the unconverted as long as we have opportunity. Perhaps the Lord will in a way yet unseen to us, open this heart to receive His Holy Spirit. It may seem hard to understand why we must continue to sow the seed on what is apparently unproductive ground. Here we can say in the words of the famed "Light Brigade," "Ours not to reason why. Ours but to do or die."

Perhaps no human requisite is of more importance than that of tact. Tact comes from tangere in Latin, meaning to touch. Tact is the art of touching people in just the proper way. It is an intuitive sense of what is right and proper for the occasion under the circumstances. The Lord Jesus gives all His evangelists the command to be tactful. "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves."²⁵ By this the Savior wishes to emphasize that

25. Matthew 10; 16.

Christian love places limitations upon the evangelist. He is bound to love. The world does not exercise such restraint. The Christian is to be as harmless as a sheep or a dove. He is not to return lovelessness for lovelessness. In order that the Christian may not experience needless suffering the Savior instructs him to be wise as serpents. The serpent is noted for its ability to detect danger and to escape from it. In most cases an encounter with its enemy would only result in disaster. In a like way the Christian should know that many troubles can be avoided. Many conflicts can be circumvented by a little careful forethought. At the same time the Christian is to harbor no schemes. As the dove is innocent and without schemes, so the Christian is to be without craft and guile.

There is a way of approaching a difficult subject which is most likely to bring success. There are "psychological avenues" which more than others will find our subject in a mood amenable to suggestion. A classic example of this was Nathan's approach to the problem of rebuking King David for his sin of adultery. Nathan could have bluntly censured David. The result might have been David's resentment, antagonism, and persistent refusal to recognize his sin. Instead Nathan told him a simple little story of a stolen lamb, and David became wonderfully indignant, and pronounced judgement upon the perpetrator of the foul deed. It was then that Nathan pointed

out with inescapable analogy, "Thou art the man!" David stood condemned by his own words. Scolding should never be practised. There is an automatic reaction against the scold which takes the form of suspicion, or avoidance. Faultfinding is loathsome. It is only the kindly man who can effectively rebuke sin. Tact is a gift, but it is also a habit of mind which can be acquired. It is the art of learning how to achieve desired goals without encouraging opposition.

The next major consideration is that of the Evangelist's resources. It must first of all be clearly understood that actually the evangelist himself is only a tool in the hand of God. This is important! If a man goes out to preach the Gospel of Christ relying upon his own powers for success, he is soon to realize his failure. The work of evangelism is not man's work but God's work. God alone can convert the sinner from his ways. The evangelist is responsible only for sowing the seed. It is his great consolation that God isn't expecting him through his personality, his tact, his love, his eloquence, his logical argument and persuasive presentation to do the actual work of converting the unbeliever. That God alone can do. Failure to recognize this fact is inviting disappointment, frustration and a sense of personal failure.

Recognizing that God is actually in control of any missionary endeavor, we still have our own individual

responsibilities. We are workers together with God. At our disposal are many tools and resources. In the first place, the evangelist has the Power of the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus linked the preaching of His Word with the power of the Holy Ghost. "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."²⁶ God is the evangelist's number one source of help. In the case of the apostles it is recorded that "they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them."²⁷ The armchair evangelist will scarcely appreciate what this great "resource" means. It is only when the complete sense of his own feebleness comes home to him, that the evangelist can really appreciate the tremendous significance of the Savior's pledge, "Lo, I am with you always."²⁸

The work of conversion presupposes a conviction of sin. Only the Holy Spirit, working through the Word, can produce that conviction of sin. The whole work of conversion is the work of God. The soul cannot "lift itself up by its own bootstraps." This conviction of sin is the

²⁶. Acts 1; 8.

²⁷. Mark 16; 20.

²⁸. Matthew 28; 20.

work of the Holy Spirit. "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send Him unto you. And He, when He is come, will convict the world concerning sin."²⁹ Dods explains this by pointing out that the Holy Spirit works in man the realization that unbelief is sin. That the man without Christ is dead in sins. In other words, the Holy Spirit will press home this conviction; that the man without Christ is lost.³⁰ A deep sense of sin is a necessary step in the recognition of one's need for a Savior. The Lord says that "they that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."³¹ In soul winning the evangelist is seeking not merely to heal man's sickness, but to actually give him a new life; not merely to effect a change in his heart, but actually to give the man a new heart. This only the Holy Spirit can do: "I will put a new spirit within you, and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh."³²

Until a man realizes his complete dependence upon God for his success, he is not yet an evangelist. The real evangelist will recognize this, however, and will

29. John 16; 7 (Translation by author).

30. Marcus Dods, "The Four Gospels," I, The Expositor's Greek Testament, Editor, W. Robertson Nicoll, p. 835.

31. Matthew 9; 12.

32. Ezekiel 11; 20.

continually ask God for His Holy Spirit in order that the work may have success. God has promised that He will give His Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.³³ It is presumptuous arrogance for a man to venture into the paths of the evangelist without the firm confidence that God walks with him. Human resources have their little values, but in the end they do not convert a soul. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."³⁴

The greatest resource which the evangelist has at his command is the Word of God. The Bible speaks of the Word of God as an effective weapon in spiritual warfare. "For the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."³⁵ Much talking about the Word of God and about the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and about the condemnation of sin, may miss the mark. Real preaching which presents the Living Word with its direct message, pierces into the very core of the soul.

The evangelist has other resources at his disposal. All things which God has placed in his control are to serve the cause of preaching the Gospel. The evangelist's

33. Luke 11; 13.

34. Zechariah 4; 6.

35. Hebrews 4; 12.

mind, education, wealth, talents, personality and all possessions from his automobile to his home, are all to serve the Lord. While one should not falsely credit himself with winning a soul to Christ, yet human endowments and possessions are given to Christians for just this purpose; that they may serve the cause of Christ's kingdom. No one should wait to be specially gifted before entering upon the Lord's work. Rather he should with humility and confidence use those gifts which God has given him to win souls for the Master.

A rather new realization for many Christians is that the church is one of their mission resources. The layman should be trained to think of the pastor also as a valuable tool in his own personal mission program. The pastor by virtue of his specialized training is in a position to render invaluable aid to the layman. The layman will do well to get his prospect to meet the pastor. Such agencies of the church as Ladie's Aid Societies, Young People's Groups, Men's Clubs and the like, all provide help for the layman in his efforts to bring the Unchurched under the influence of the Life-Giving Word.

Last but by no means least is the special resource of every Christian, Prayer. As the noble Arthur speaks to Bedivere in Tennyson's "Idylls of the King," "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." Christ has commanded his workers to pray: "Ask and it shall be

given you."³⁶ "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."³⁷ All truly great evangelists have prayed. Even the Lord Jesus Himself prayed. He prayed for the whole Christian Church. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their Word..."³⁸ The pastor who fails to pray for the success of the Kingdom is a paradox. The layman who fails to pray for the Unchurched and for the success of his pastor's labors certainly has no right to complain when his own pastor appears to be failing in his task. The first question he should ask himself is: "Did I pray for the pastor and the success of the work?" If he did not pray, then he too is to blame for the failure. Prayer! What a glorious opportunity. What great responsibility! It is hard to conceive of an evangelist who does not pray. What a comfort it is to know that when all human ingenuity and resources fail, the case is not at all a hopeless one, for God still lives, and this great resource shall never fail.

The importance of personal evangelism in the work of the Kingdom cannot be over-emphasized. It has always been the most effective means of winning people for Christ.

36. Matthew 7; 7.

37. James 1; 5.

38. John 17; 20ff.

The great conquests of the Church have come about through personal evangelism. The Apostolic age and the first century of our era are classic examples. Small congregations were started by a missionary. About the time that these congregations were self-sustaining, persecutions came and the people were forced to flee. Wherever they went they carried the seed of the life-giving Gospel. Personal testimony was the dominant element during these early years. After the time of the Apostle Paul we search in vain for the name of another great missionary, and yet by the end of the first century the Gospel had been carried throughout most of the then civilized world. The early Christians were personal evangelists. Christ was real to them. They lived Christ. Wherever they went they testified to the love of Jesus.

As the shepherd of the flock, the pastor has particular opportunities for personal evangelistic efforts. He has at his disposal a variety of methods for dealing with the unchurched individually. At the close of each Sunday service, it is the pastor particularly who has the unique opportunity to greet the unchurched man or woman who may have come to his church as a visitor. Such visitors should as a matter of course be asked to register their names and addresses in the guest book and be invited to return again. Here again the pastor must show a genuine friendly interest in his unchurched friend, or all his overtures will be

misinterpreted by the prospect as simply selfish efforts "to get him into the church."

Some pastors send the parish paper to all unchurched men and women of the community, particularly to those who have expressed some interest in the church. This serves the good purpose of keeping the church always before the consciousness of the prospects. Suggestion is powerful! Many of these people will in time find their interest in the church increased to such an extent that they will begin to attend divine services.

The pastor as head of the congregation should see to it that there is proper dissemination of religious literature in his community. Public libraries and reading rooms should be supplied with Christian books, periodicals and tracts. Often the doctor's office will provide a place for good quality religious journals. Extreme care should be exercised that no literature is distributed, whether in book or pamphlet form, which would tend to give the impression of cheapness to the Church or her message. While it is no doubt true that men have been converted from reading the Gospel message printed upon cheap grade tract paper, it is also true that such cheapness belies the dignity and importance of the message. As a rule it costs little more to have tracts printed on a good grade of paper.

Another avenue of approach to the Unchurched which the

pastor has is the radio. Many people never hear any sermon, except over the radio. If the pastor neglects this opportunity to reach them, he may not reach them at all. This writer is well aware of the fact that there are still some parsons who object to any radio service on the ground that "if sermons are broadcast, people won't come to church." The general consensus of opinion among those pastors who have tried radio broadcasting is that it is a highly successful way of bringing the Gospel and the church to the attention of many who otherwise might be quite oblivious of both. The pastor who contemplates such broadcasts will do well to consult with some adviser who is competent to offer suggestions. Often congregation members can be helpful in getting suitable time for the broadcast. If the approach is properly made, many stations will find themselves in a position to donate time for the broadcast, but such courtesy should not be expected. A time should be selected for the broadcast which fits into a setting of proper dignity. Technical details should be as perfect as it is possible to make them. Here we are in competition with the best programs emanating from Radio City. A badly planned radio program may alienate many potential listeners. A radio broadcast, properly planned and presenting a real living message for the Unchurched, is an opportunity which every pastor should investigate.

Another opportunity which the pastor has is the Mailing Mission. Tracts, devotional books, sermons, letters and the like are sent to mission prospects throughout the immediate area. For one cent it is possible to send a devotional booklet to any person on the list. The mechanical details of such a mission can be given to consecrated laymen.³⁹ It would be well if every church would have such a Mailing Mission, sending tracts and appropriate literature to unchurched prospects in the area. With careful selection of materials, much good can come of such a mission.

No man should consider himself a pastor unless he seeks the lost sheep. Every pastor should systematically obtain the names and addresses of all unchurched within his reach and visit them in their homes. Much could be written on the nature of such visits. Suffice it here to say that the pastor should leave at least these few clear impressions:

1. I'm your friend and I'm here to help you.
2. I have come to know Jesus Christ as my personal Savior and a power for my life, and I wish you would come to know Him too.
3. Our church stands here to give you something you can get nowhere else. Please do come!

The mere fact that the pastor has paid a visit will serve as a reminder to the mission prospect to go to church.

³⁹ For further information on the Mailing Mission see Today, Vol. I, Number 1, p. 20ff.

The old adage that "A house going preacher makes a church going people" applies as well to the Unchurched as it does to congregation members.

There is an implication for visitation which has come about in the last years. Modern methods of transportation have greatly increased the distance which people are able to travel to attend divine services. Our old concepts as to the geographical size of a parish may need some revision. In rural areas particularly, it is not uncommon today for people to drive twenty miles or more each Sunday to attend services. For years there were throughout the rural areas of the United States what we might call "black belts," which were thought to be beyond the reach of any of the established congregations. Today people have demonstrated that they can drive twenty miles and more each way to church services. The implication is that the pastor has a much wider area over which he may reasonably expect to win people to his church and to the Savior.

In calling on the Unchurched, the pastor should of course prepare the way for subsequent visits. It is impossible to discuss every aspect of a task which has so many facets. Certain common sense facts ought always to be borne in mind however and are mentioned here. The pastor should select the time of his visit with some care. It is not sound procedure to call on Mrs. Jones on the Wednesday prior to Thanksgiving, when she will have her mind occupied with the

details of the morrow's dinner. The best time for such calls is the afternoon, when there is a little more leisure than in the forenoon. Sundays and holidays sometimes enable the pastor to find the men at home. The evenings are probably the best time of all, but in many parishes the rush of activities makes this quite impossible. In making calls, it is natural that sometimes the pastor will find no one at home. For these cases the pastor should have specially printed cards which he may leave to inform the people that he has called, and to let them know that he is interested in them. Such a card should contain the name of the church and its location, the time of the services and of the Sunday school classes, and his own name address and telephone number. Further details on personal calling will be taken up in the next section dealing with the Church Canvass. People are of so many different backgrounds and cultural conditions and individual prejudices are of such a varied nature that it is obviously impossibly to outline approaches for individual cases. Lange treats this subject at some length, and cites numerous objections which people raise to Christian doctrine or church membership, together with brief answers to these objections.⁴⁰

The past decades have definitely seen a change in the evangelistic program of the church from extensive to intensive mission work. Former mission effort concentrated

40. Lange, op. cit., pp. 40-60.

on reaching the masses of the people in a general way. Today, the emphasis has necessarily shifted to the more intensive, "fine tooth comb," method. Intensive mission work is generally begun means of a well organized canvass.

In order that such intensive work may succeed, it is important that all details of the evangelistic task be well systematized. One of the first steps in beginning a canvass is to determine what are to be the geographical boundaries of the field. The pastor should meet with neighboring pastors and inform them of his purpose to establish a new congregation, or to canvass a specific area.

Canvassers should be carefully instructed as to their objectives and the methods best adapted to securing them. A canvasser should be conscious of his high office as an "Ambassador for Christ." His clothing and general appearance must never be slovenly. First impressions count. It will certainly not antagonize any mission prospect to find the canvasser without cigarettes. Many people lose some respect for the man who smokes. The canvasser will do well to refrain from smoking.

In canvassing, we are dealing with people we have never met before. A calm, reserved, cheerful friendliness is a number one asset. The canvasser must know why he is there and without fumbling get to the point. He must be a good listener, but at the same time be able to direct the conversation along proper lines and toward correct conclusions.

It is not the place of the canvasser to be argumentative. Argument only antagonizes and never convinces. The purpose of the canvass is not that of teaching the whole of Christian doctrine, but merely to get essential information as to the number of unchurched, their church preference if any, the number of children in the home, etc. The other purpose is to lay a foundation of friendship and good will which will serve as an open door for further conversations at a later time. Another important fact to remember is that the canvasser does not in any sense try to give the impression that "he knows all the answers." No one knows all the answers. When a question is asked which he cannot answer with assurance, he will do well to admit his inability with complete honesty. This kindles admiration and respect, while the opposite procedure of trying to improvise an answer or to guess kindles only uncertainty, distrust and contempt. It should go without saying that the canvasser—as an ambassador of the King, should be meticulously correct in his behavior and his speech. Slang can well be avoided. Courtesy and thoughtfulness for the wishes of the other person are absolutely essential.

No canvass can be undertaken without proper provision for records. Cards should be prepared for the desired information. It will be well if the canvasser will jot down some personal references on each card so that he can more easily recall the prospect when he makes his follow-up call.

Memory plays tricks, especially when hundreds of calls are made. Anything that will prove valuable in the follow-up should be noted on the reverse of the card before undertaking the next call. On the evening of the canvass the information should be transferred to permanent records and tabulated according to the plan of operation for that particular parish.

IV. THE APPROACH THROUGH LAY EVANGELISM

As an organization grows in size, there is generally a corresponding centralization of administration. This is necessarily so. Efficiency demands a centralized control. Centralized control as a rule requires centralized finance. This fact is at once perceivable both in the secular administrations and in the church. In the state the steady trend has been for the Federal government to take over a larger and larger share of government administration. This has been in the interest of greater efficiency. In the church likewise, synods have taken over responsibilities of congregations. The phase of this trend which concerns us here is the centralized mission program of the church.

In the interest of having a unified mission policy, the administration of foreign missions has been placed in the hands of central boards. Home missions likewise have been generally under the direction of the District Mission Board. There is much to be said in favor of such an arrangement. Men can be placed more strategically than would be possible if each congregation were to attempt this work on its own. Foreign mission enterprises would loom too large for any single congregation but can now be undertaken by groups of congregations working through a synodical board.

Through such central administration, work can be carried out in an orderly and systematic manner.

The centralization of administration is seldom an unmixed blessing. Certainly it has not been such in the Church. While it is true that centralization of authority and responsibility have brought numerous advantages, it is also true that this centralization has brought with it concomitant factors which have operated against the best interests of the Church.

As one looks over the mission activities of the major number of Christian churches today, one is impressed by the lack of mission activity on the part of the laity. Laymen have come to look on mission work as the responsibility of synods, or districts, or churches, or preachers, but not as their own direct responsibility. One reason for this is, no doubt, the centralization of administration in the Church. Another reason may be the tendency in our modern age of specialization to assume that every man should apply himself to the task for which he is particularly prepared and keep his hands away from work in which he is not proficient. For this reason many laymen have had a reticence about personal evangelistic efforts. They feel first of all that "the Church" is taking care of mission work. "They support the church. The church does the work." In the second place many a layman feels himself ill-equipped to do the work of an evangelist. Certainly these two attitudes

find no counterpart in the teachings of Christ, nor in His Commission to His disciples.

It must be perfectly clear from the outset that no mission program for the church can be considered successful without the full participation of the laity in personal evangelism. The early followers of Christ seemed to understand the absolute need of using lay manpower. This fact is appreciated in foreign mission fields, where every convert is expected to bring in others. In our own country, however, insidious shackles of parish routine, coupled with some false notions as to the layman's abilities and responsibilities, have made the laity of many parishes predominantly passive receivers of the Word, rather than active messengers of it. Kernahan has written much on the importance of Lay Evangelism for the work of the Church. He seems to be fully aware of the tremendous potential which rests in the laity. "The laymen can Christianize America in one decade if they are carefully instructed and efficiently directed in this most sacred work within the realm of human activity."⁴¹ Whether we fully agree with this statement or not is not the point here. The point is that the laymen certainly do represent the foremost resource of the Church. To fail to utilize this resource by careful, systematic leadership is to fail in our duty to His Church. Kernahan writes concerning this great challenge:

41. Earl Kernahan, Adventures in Visitation Evangelism, p.14.

There is probably nothing greater in all the realm of religious achievement than for the Church to discover the indispensability of the layman in the business of making Christian disciples. There is nothing rarer in all Christian experience than for a layman to discover the fact that if the Christian Kingdom is to be established, Christ must go calling in the person of His followers.⁴²

As long as a pastor holds secret skepticism as to the layman's ability to lead people to the Savior, he can scarcely be expected to take time in his busy schedule to lead laymen into the work of evangelism. There is a difficulty here. Pastors have become accustomed to thinking in traditional and conventional patterns. Perhaps nothing becomes stereotyped quicker than a method. It is difficult for the pastor to believe that the ordinary layman can win people to Christ. If the pastor doesn't believe it, is it to be wondered at that laymen are diffident? Jesus never showed this lack of confidence. Kernahan cites this fact:

It is very evident to one who reads the Scriptures carefully that the only prerequisite that Christ insisted upon for any one who was to do this work was sincerity and friendship for Himself. He sent men out to make disciples who had at that time no other qualifications. One man went out to stress the claims of Christ upon life who later rejected Him. Another man went out and succeeded in attracting the attention of some who later betrayed Him. A man by the name of Thomas who was all mixed up in his theology went calling in Jesus' name.⁴³

The centralization of administration, whether in the state or in the church, always tends to shunt the individual away from active participation, unless he is actually

42. Kernahan, op. cit., p. 16.

43. Ibid., p. 18.

hired for some specific task. In the government men are hired to do the work, while the people support the administration through taxes. In the church professionally trained laborers are engaged by the congregation, district or synod, and the work is supported through the contributions of laity. Now there is one very essential difference here. The state does not lack support from its citizens because it can levy taxes. It gets its support by compulsory means. The Church depends upon the voluntary contributions of its members. Members contribute because they see a need for their money in the advancement of the Kingdom. Centralization of administration tends to put intermediate steps between the layman the work of the ministry itself. He contributes for needs he does not immediately see or feel. His sense of mission obligation ceases with the payment of a certain sum of money. After that the work of the church becomes the responsibility of those to whom he has entrusted his contributions. Specific opportunities seldom come his way. He is confronted with the general mission obligation and tends to feel, that if he does his little bit everything will work out alright. He is confident that the work will be done, whether he contributes or not. The argument that "if everyone felt that way, no work could be done" is to him purely academic, and after all he is doing as much as the rest. If the challenge is presented to the layman in a way that clearly shows him a unique opportunity, the whole

situation changes. He is confronted with a chance to do a work for Christ which will not be done, unless he does his full part. The unique opportunity presents him with a unique responsibility. The practical truth can be seen from a few illustrations. There are in this country some congregations which support foreign missionaries. These churches are not particularly wealthy, nevertheless they are supporting six or more foreign missionaries. The members of these congregations realize that "these missionaries would not be sent unless we sent them." They recognize their opportunity and responsibility in a way which would be quite rare under centralized mission administration.

The fundamental idea is this: Churches have centralized for greater efficiency, but have lost in the process lay responsibility and activity. The solution is immediately to deal out specific opportunities to specific individuals or groups. Anytime procedures are taken for centralization, parallel procedures should be taken for apportionment of responsibilities. If this is not done the lay constituency will be divorced from concrete responsibilities and will tend toward apathetic responses.

To make this matter a little more direct and concrete we will take the example of support for foreign missions. Under the present centralized control congregations and members feel constrained to support the general mission program of Synod, in the measure which they feel is proper.

Their conception of what is proper may be determined in a large degree by the example of other congregations about them. If on the other hand synod presents to the individual congregations the unique privilege and opportunity of supporting a missionary in some foreign field, with the understanding that unless this congregation (or congregations) act, this particular missionary can not be sent, the whole thing becomes a matter of conscience for those members. Synod still retains the direction of mission policies, as indeed it should, but by presenting specific and definite opportunities to small groups of Christians, each layman is better able to see his own responsibility in the work of the Kingdom.

A parallel case can be cited for the congregation itself. Here the emphasis is not so much on contribution, as it is on direct lay evangelism. As long as each layman is responsible for the conversion of all the unchurched in the parish, he may likely feel inclined to say, "Let George do it." If the pastor will take the time and trouble to instruct his members individually in the methods of lay evangelism, the results will justify all his labor. The pastor must then point out to each member that he has particular, unique opportunities to win certain unchurched people, people whom no one else can deal with quite as well. Perhaps their unique opportunity is the result of a school friendship, a business association, or a neighborhood social

group. At any rate, the pastor should duly impress upon this member that these opportunities are his responsibilities. They are talents for the service of the church and the Lord will ask an accounting as to what use each Christian has made of his opportunities. The pastor should make each member whom he considers prepared to do this work responsible for a certain definite number of unchurched people. He may ask Mr. Smith to be responsible for the opportunities at the bank in which he works, Mr. Stewart for the Public Service Company, Mr. Johnson for City Ice and Coal, etc. This procedure will seem somewhat new to many, and somewhat naive to others, but the fact is that it is neither new nor naive. Dr. Kernahan reports that wherever it has been tried it has met with success. A successful pastor near Chicago has followed this type of program for a number of years. The Y. M. C. A. uses a parallel system in recruiting its members, and its numberless successful membership campaigns testify to the soundness of the method.

In any program of lay evangelism it is a foremost necessity that there is adequate provision for the adult instruction of those who have been persuaded to investigate the claims of the church. It should be emphasized that the lay evangelist need not convert his prospect to a full confession of faith in the Savior. It is enough that he persuades him to "Come and see." After the unchurched man or woman does come, it is of course necessary that Jesus

is really presented to them. Evangelists should consider it part of their task to accompany adults to instruction periods and to integrate them into the group. In some cases this will not be necessary, but in a great many it will. An hour or two spent weekly in such a group will be of benefit also to the evangelist.

Lay evangelism constitutes the most successful method at our disposal for bringing the unchurched under the power of the Word. In the average congregation there is a wealth of manpower. The members of the average congregation constitute a tremendous mission potential. This potential rests in them by virtue of the unique position which they hold over toward the unchurched. In many cases laymen will secure a more ready entrance into the heart of the Unchurched than a pastor. These parishioners have contacts by the score of which the pastor is entirely unaware. The pastor cannot possibly know all of the opportunities in a parish, nor be in a position to take advantage of them. The laity is the pastor's number one opportunity. It will mean hours of work in training his laymen. It will require additional hours to lead laymen individually into this work, either by direct help, or by careful assignment to a specific task. Granting all these facts, the pastor can spend a fair measure of his time in no better way than in guiding his people in lay evangelism.

The first purpose of lay evangelism is to win the

Unchurched for Christ. There are other "by-products" of such a program, which while not directly evangelistic, do have an indirect bearing and deserve mention here. A program of this kind has its effect upon the regular "old time" members of the church. In many congregations people are systematically taught that they should do mission work, but they don't do it. No one has shown them how to do it. The Lord's Commission is dinned in their ears Sunday after Sunday, and in the majority of cases nothing happens. Old habits and traditional inhibitions prevent the Christian from being a missionary. He professes a dynamic faith, and yet he is aware of the fact that his lethargic mission practice is a crying contradiction. The thought cannot but simmer beneath the subconscious, "If I'm not doing anything to win others for Christ, either I'm a poor Christian, or else the whole thing really isn't so important." He comes to church Sunday after Sunday and receives of the Bread of Life, but he is failing to bring others to the feast of love. Kernahan writes

For nineteen years I tried as a pastor to inspire the members of the churches that I served to do this work. I never succeeded in any large measure. The conviction grew, year after year, that our method was wrong. We had a plethora of impressions and no adequate expressions. What we needed was not more sergices but more service.⁴⁴

Mere exhortation is not enough. There must be direct leadership. Individuals must be given specific responsibilities

44. Kernahan, op. cit., p. 24.

and shown how to fulfill them.

I have observed, however, that unless our courses in religious education are supplemented by Visitation Evangelism, neither the teacher nor the pupil will ever fully know the immensity of Jesus' personality. In fact after a person reviews all of the activities of the Church as usually organized, he is compelled to say that there is nothing that reveals the dynamic of the Christian faith like Visitation Evangelism.⁴⁵

Another value of Lay Evangelism is the effect it has in clarifying confused religious thinking. In order to teach others, one must first of all be clear on what he himself believes. Lay Evangelism drives the evangelist back on his resources. The big heart of the Christian religion comes into its own. Shining above all else in evangelism must be the Person of Jesus Christ the Savior. Teaching others demands that the evangelist clarifies his thinking with regard to the central Christian message.

Another "by-product" of lay evangelism is that it drives people into the Scriptures. No "Ambassador of the King" can represent his Lord long without desiring to read the dispatches from his Home Country.

Hand in hand with evangelism grows the consciousness that sin is inconsistent in Christian life. This fact is readily observable in the lives of many people who have mended their ways, not only because they realized that what they had been doing was wrong, but also because they feared that their sin might prejudice some soul against the message of salvation.

45. Kernahan, op. cit., pp. 27-28.

Lay Evangelism has another great benefit. It teaches Christians to watch for mission opportunities. In the course of years Christian evangelists learn to look upon their associates, not just as the milkman, the barber, the grocer and the like, but to look deeper and see a human personality, an immortal soul which is perishing without the Lord Jesus Christ. It takes time in the beginning to get people to be real lay missionaries and to think of every person they meet as a possible mission prospect, but when this realization does come home, it pays dividends for years to come. Many times the adult converts themselves become some of the most active lay missionaries.

The more Christians are trained to see their opportunities for mission service, the more they will recognize their own responsibilities. Lay evangelism develops a sense of mission responsibility which asserts itself in many areas of Christian life. Nothing can so concretely dramatize the "Stewardship of Life" idea as active mission participation.

Last but not least, lay evangelism gives practical understanding of what it takes to do the work of the Church. Congregation members realize that while the Lord can use the smallest gift in the service of His Kingdom, yet the Church cannot support her mission program on nickels and dimes. There is danger that those who are not actively participating in mission work get the idea that in some mysterious way the Lord will take even niggardly contributions and with them finance a vast mission program.

Far be it from anyone to accuse the Lord of not doing His part, but at the same time mission history indicates that it still requires more money to support ten missionaries than to support two. A laity which is active in mission enterprise itself will be quick to sense the practical requirements of a mission program. They will realize that great missions require great sacrifice. Lay evangelism builds the matter of missions up from wishful thinking to practical evaluation.

V. THE APPROACH IN PREACHING

Preaching to the Unchurched may at first sight appear to be merely an academic subject. Sermons are as a rule preached to congregations and congregations are made up primarily of those people who are regular church members. It may seem strange therefore that anyone seeks to postulate a thesis that sermons should be preached with a view to reaching the Unchurched.

Actually the sermon which appeals to the Unchurched appeals to the congregation member as well. Preaching to the Unchurched is simply good preaching. The essential difference is this; that where regular church members may come to church even though the sermon is not just what it should be, the Unchurched will not. If a sermon is to draw the Unchurched it must be the very best. In addition it must take cognizance of the peculiar prejudices which the non-church member has toward religion, preaching and the like. This chapter will devote itself therefore to a brief consideration of those elements of preaching which are most essential, most easily overlooked and most likely to win the Unchurched.

In the first place we come to a consideration of the Content of the sermon. The sermon must have a message.

Many of the Unchurched do not attend services because they feel that the message of the sermon is irrelevant to them. There may be many reasons for this. Sad to say, in many cases, the reason is that the churches which they formerly attended had no real message. The church whose pastor speaks eloquently on every secular subject from aviation to atoms, but neglects the "balm to heal the smitten heart" has no message for the Unchurched. The scientist is not interested in the clergyman's views on the atom, the botanist is not interested in his views on the trailing arbutus, the political economist is not interested in his views on the United Nations. The Unchurched are cunning in this; they come to church expecting to hear a message from God.

It follows that if the sermon is to reach the Unchurched it must be anchored and rooted in God's message to man. God's message to man includes the whole Bible, but particularly it is the revelation of His Son, Jesus Christ. Snyder states that this revelation is not always preached:

I have heard sermons in Christian churches that could have been preached by any wide-awake rabbi. There is something extremely depressing in this prostitution of our calling. Christ is the key to the interpretation of the Scriptures and of every worthy preaching text in the Scriptures. Therefore the final test of any sermon is not merely, "Is it Scriptural?" but "Is it Scriptural in the evangelical sense? Is it aflame with the Gospel?"⁴⁶

46. Russell D. Snyder, Reality in Preaching, p. 24.

Dr. Fritz sums the matter up in short order; "If you don't preach the Gospel, you may as well not preach at all. People can go to hell without you." The minister must be bold in his preaching of the Law and the Gospel. There is nothing else. Culture fails, education fails, humanity fails. In the past decade all these vaunted "saviors" have littered the world with millions of corpses and secular knowledge has been the leading handmaiden of destruction. The Unchurched today will come to church they feel that the church is offering what they can get nowhere else. That means that the church must give a message, not from man, but from God. In such a case the message will be authoritative. We have heard it dinned in our ears so often that the world wants to be rid of authority that we unthinkingly give assent. But is this really true? It should be clear that the man who comes to church today is not coming to hear human speculations. Of such he has a super-abundance every day. He comes to church for a message from God.

We are living in a time when institutions that cannot speak with authority are in process of being consigned to the scrap heap. I can remember the days when man seemed to feel that there was something inherently sinful in authority. It irked him immeasurably. Of late he had had a change of heart, or rather a change of heart is being forced upon him by a stern logic of reality. He is now turning with a longing that is almost pathological to those who have the will and the courage to command. There is a comparable tendency in the realm of the soul. Men have lost confidence in the cavalier theorizing that graced and disgraced the American pulpit only a few years ago. They come to

us for an authoritative message, a voice from on high.⁴⁷

The matter of the preacher's message was covered in Chapter Two. Here it is enough to note that no sermon will appeal to the Unchurched in the Christian sense, unless it highlights Sin and Grace. Millions of Unchurched today would give their right arms to know the destiny which lies in store, and without any authoritative Word, they are burning hopelessly from futile faiths to quirky mediums, but never finding peace for their restless souls until they are brought face to face with the Son of God.

The Unchurched have peculiar prejudices against religion. Sometimes this is due to their association with certain modernist churches which have offered them sticks and stubble, when they had come expecting bread. It is said that everyone unconsciously seeks a healing theology. To cure the sin which besets the soul no mere shallow sentimental moralisms will suffice. As Dr. Maier says, "You cannot cure cancer with cosmetics nor check a brain tumor with a haircut."⁴⁸ The cure must be nothing short of the full Gospel of Jesus Christ. Christianity should not be thought to consist in the assent to a set of logical syllogisms. The charge has been raised that the church has in many cases drifted into 13th century scholasticism,

47. Snyder, op. cit., p. 35.

48. Walter A. Maier, Christ for Every Crisis, quoted by Snyder, op. cit., p. 23.

brought "up to date" by Melancthon. It is thought by some that the first step in presenting Christianity to the Unchurched is to establish the inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures. After this fact has been duly apprehended, it is possible to get assent on all the cardinal doctrines of Christianity. Now in reality, belief in the inspiration of the Scriptures is rather a fruit of faith, than a cause of it. Christian faith comes not from a system of Aristotelian syllogisms, but from the presentation of God's grace to man through Jesus Christ. When God's grace through Christ is preached to men, the invitation is extended to "Come back to God," and by the power of the Holy Spirit many do accept Christ as their Savior, even when they do not yet understand how the fish could have swallowed Jonah or how Genesis can be harmonized with their conceptions of modern geology. The immediate source of Christian faith and certainty is not first of all to be clear on the inspiration of the Scripture but Christ. Now certainly the Christian will recognize the Scripture as God's inspired Word. Such recognition is the fruit of faith. Without the Gospel of Christ, the Scripture would be quite meaningless. It is the Christian who can truly appreciate that the Scripture is God's Word which is able to make him wise unto salvation, which is in Christ Jesus. The preacher who wishes to reach the Unchurched should clearly perceive that his number one purpose is to portray Jesus Christ and through

Him, God's grace to men.

In considering the techniques of sermon preparation and delivery, attention must naturally be focused on the minister himself. The minister in the pulpit is a channel of communication between God and the hearer. He is not the source of the information but the channel for it. Dr. Caemmerer likens the minister to a window through which those who look can see the grace of God in Jesus Christ. He points out that the minister should be not a "dirty window" and so obscure the Gospel message, nor should he try to be a "beautiful colored window" so that people will say "Look at the pretty window," but he should be a clear window so that people looking through him will say, "Look at the Light!" The sermon must carry the conviction to the hearer, "God is speaking to me!" When the minister preaches directly the content of God's Word, there is bound to be the impact of the Spirit on life. In such a case, God is speaking to men.

The first consideration in sermon preparation is that the author have clearly in mind just what he proposes to teach in a given sermon. A careful study of the text will reveal that God lays down certain principles which have implications for life. The preacher must first be clear on what God says. This in many cases requires the careful study of the text in the original. After God's message is clearly perceived the next step is to consider what the

implications for that message are in terms of life situations. What experiences there are in the lives of people which have direct relationship to the message of God. The better the pastor knows his people the better he will be able to understand the implications which a text holds for them. As the minister meditates on the needs of his people and on God's message for them a specific unified goal should crystalize for him. Often this is the most difficult part of the sermon. Often goals present themselves which are inadequate. Since the Goal will in a large measure determine the sermon it is of first importance to see that the goal is properly oriented with respect to the Gospel. It is a tragedy for a minister to find a "clever" idea for a goal, and develop it and then find that the whole sermon was man-motivated, rather than Christ-motivated. It is not easy to get the concrete goal or central thought in mind. Dr. Theodore Graebner suggests that the thoughts of the text be listed on separate slips of paper so that piece by piece the whole doctrine of the text may be extracted. He then suggests that the separate ideas be placed in proper relation to each other under a more general head. After the central thought has been seized upon, it can perhaps by careful study be still further defined and delimited to make the central thought of the sermon specific, clear and concise.

Next to the central thought is the plan. There must not only be a goal, but also a route by which to reach that

goal. This route is the planned presentation. No general rule can be laid down which will with mathematical certainty fit all sermons or all texts. The text speaks life and life cannot be categorized. An outline which would fit one sermon for a particular congregation might be quite out of place in another. In drawing up principles for the plan of the sermon therefore, it is necessary to confine ourselves to the basic essentials which will in general hold good for all conditions.

In drawing up the plan for the sermon, one should be aware of the requirements of modern style. Peoples' tastes change from time to time. Buildings which were built fifty to a hundred or more years ago show marked differences from current structures. Take for example the large business houses of a large city. The older styles showed a marked tendency toward ornateness, bordering in some cases on the baroque-rococo style which in the 17th and 18th centuries actually met with quite universal approval. Today as we look at these structures we are inclined to feel that such ornateness is extravagant, wasteful, purposeless, and not particularly attractive. By contrast a modern skyscraper looks good although it is as bald as a cheese box with its plain vertical and horizontal lines. Now the important thing is that tastes have changed! The ornateness which was once considered beautiful is to the citizen of the rushing 20th century, not at all attractive. Modern man's sense

of what is right and proper in style has been largely molded by the concept that "form must follow function."

What holds good in architecture holds good for sermon structure as well. Every part of the sermon must serve the central purpose. The modern unity is dynamic rather than a cluster of associated ideas. From the word go, the sermon must begin to move toward its climax or goal. The destination need not be immediately disclosed, but the pastor should be sure that every sentence is carrying him substantially closer to the goal he seeks to achieve. There is one field where most people are able to excel in just this very thing. That is in telling a joke. When we begin to tell a joke, the first thing we think about is the "punch line," the goal we are aiming for. Then as we begin to lay the stage for that punch line, we keep in mind what kind of people we ^{are} speaking to, whether they are children or adults, men or women, and the like. Every part is molded to fit the imagination of those with whom we are dealing. No detail is omitted which would take the force out of the "punch line." Finally when the stage is properly set, we drive home the "punch line" and hope everyone laughs. Now the essential point here is that from the very start the joke was "goal motivated and goal controlled." Everything that went into the preliminaries had its purpose in getting people to laugh. It may seem to some a bit facetious to compare a sermon to the telling of a joke, but what is

intended here is that a sermon should rise from whatever humble beginnings, establish the necessary road-beds and drive toward a persuasive climax.

The general plan of a sermon should be constructed in line with the central thought. The purpose must be dominant. The goal must be achieved! The clearer the goal is in the mind of the pastor, the easier it will be for him to construct a plan to achieve it. When one knows clearly what must be done, the strength and wherewithal to do it is more easily summoned. It is precisely here that many sermons fall down. It may look like inactivity personified for a pastor to meditate over his text and his purpose for hour on end, before he puts a word of his sermon on paper, but it is here that the real depth of analysis and aptness of application get into the sermon. The architect in designing a house does not make a rudimentary sketch and then build a house. He knows precisely what kind of house he will build before he nails one piece of lumber to another. He is aware of the fact that the front porch must be in harmony with the entire structure. Until he has conceived of the whole building as a harmonious, effective unit, he does not begin to build. In the process of building, some small additions or corrections may be necessary, but these are minor. The completed house is essentially what he had conceived it to be before the actual building ever began. In a like way no sermon should be written piecemeal. Every part of the sermon should

contribute to its dynamic purpose of persuasion.

A good sermon is always interesting. Interest is not just an added nicety. It is a fundamental requirement for preaching and especially for preaching to the Unchurched. We will briefly consider some of the devices for achieving interest. A man is interested in what has relevance to his own welfare. If a sermon doesn't interest it is because the man feels it has no real relation to himself or his welfare. There can be no real teaching in such a sermon. Worse still a vital subject is introduced and then dismissed in such a way that the hearer gets the impression that religion is something which ^{has} no particular significance for him. There is no real teaching without interest. If people are ~~gaught~~ taught in church they will come back. That is another way of saying that if the sermon is to draw the Unchurched it must interest. The sermon must be relevant to the interests and needs of the laity. It is a common complaint of Unchurched that the sermon deals with theology but that theology has no meaning for life. The Unchurched are not particularly interested in theological problems. It may be quite important for the theologian to know the geography of the Holy Land, but the Unchurched are not going to come to church to hear a parson discourse on the subject. It is easy for a pastor to fall into the practice of inflicting theological problems on the laymen. It would be well for every pastor to make every sermon pass a "So what?" test. He should mercilessly go through the sermon

and strike out whatever does not have a clear relationship to the needs of his hearers. In some cases he will be surprised at how much his sermon will be improved by elimination of the unnecessary and irrelevant. Every statement of a sermon must be a logical step in its progression toward the final goal. We must deny ourselves interesting side-issues and concentrate on leading our hearers swiftly, step by step to the desired goal.

Another element of interest is movement. Advertizing experts are well aware of the psychological fact that in movement there is interest. It is said that Cicero's famous dictum was that the three requisites for a good presentation are "Movement, movement, movement." It should be the aim of the minister to send parishioners away from church with one main idea in mind. The sermon which moves steadily toward some definite goal has the advantage that it is easily remembered. It is a good feeling to sit in the pews and to feel "We're moving. We're getting somewhere. We're not bogged down in some irrelevant speculation. We're not riding the slow freight of verbosity which picks up verbal freight at every side issue, but we're on the Streamliner. We're seeing the scenery, but above all, we're getting there!"

Another matter to be borne in mind when preaching to the Unchurched is clarity. No one is interested for long in what he does not understand. If the terminology or the argument of a sermon is difficult it is very probable that

many, both regular members and unchurched, will fail to follow the progression. Each paragraph of a sermon may have a specific point following logically upon what has gone before, but if each paragraph has not definitely clinched that point, it will be a rare genius who will be able to follow the progression of the sermon. Naturally if a link or two in the progression is missed, interest is lost as well. The audience should never be allowed to feel, "What is he talking about?" "What's the connection?" A sermon must be "Over clear." The reason for this is twofold. First the pastor is apt to take too much for granted. He knows the progression, follows it easily and supposes his people will do likewise. Secondly, the hearers are all human enough to take a few moments here or there for reflection and hence may miss a link in the presentation. Unless the presentation is doubly clear, these people will have lost the connection and be unable to reestablish it. Clarity and order go hand in hand. Only the clear can be impressive and only the orderly will be remembered. Some pastors explicitly state the point of each paragraph at successive stages in the development of the sermon. The effect of one point succeeding another logically and forcefully does much to hold interest. It cannot be done in all sermons, or it will lose its effect, but where the progression is not made clear by literal statement, it should be clear from the presentation.

The Chinese have a proverb that "One picture is worth ten thousand words." There is a corrolary to that proverb which states that "He is the true preacher, who can turn an ear into an eye." The more graphic and distinct a pastor can make his presentation, the easier it will be comprehended and the more effective his message will become. There are words which more than others have graphic content. The minister should avoid general adjectives and seek those with a definite graphic content. Instead of "very hot" use "blistering." Instead of "very cold" use "icey." In painting pictures today, the artist must conform to the mind of his audience. We are today dealing with an audience which is steeped in exaggeration. Every form of advertisement seeks to leave the impression that it is the very best. A small inconsequential product is played up as though the future of the race might well depend on it alone. A tour through many modern art galleries will show the same thing. On one canvass the sole subject is an old tattered shoe ... but it is deemed important enough to occupy a canvass 2½ by 3 feet. Nearby is a painting of a skull of a cow. Not a very important subject, but it too is spread over about eight square feet of canvass. We are living in a time of colossalism. If a thing is to be thought important it must rate space. Now nothing could be more ridiculous than such a concept, but it is nevertheless prevalent today, and the minister will do well to recognize this quirk of the 20th

century mind. Colossalism and impressionism are almost correlatives. Impressionism is another form of isolation and exaggeration. The basic idea is given prominence. In painting sermonic pictures the pastor should beware of inflicting on his audience unnecessary details which becloud the lesson he strives to teach. Seek out the heart of the message and make it crystal clear.

The Lord Jesus constantly used pictures when He spoke. Booth claims that in the Sermon on the Mount alone there are 58 metaphors.⁴⁹ The metaphor is a powerful figure of speech and if well used, gives a vivid quality to the style. The man who may completely miss the grandeur in a simple abstract statement, will more readily catch the message in a picture, metaphor or simile. It requires effort to translate the technical phraseology and abstract concepts of theology into the vocabulary of the layman audience. The easy way is to simply spout theological jargon and piously hope that the audience will through the grace of God and the power of the Spirit fully comprehend what would otherwise be quite vague and unintelligible.

The theological vocabulary of many a parson beclouds his sermon message. It is not the purpose here to go into a lengthy discussion of which words are suitable for sermon use and which are not, but a few illustrations may suffice.

49. John Nicholls Booth, The Quest for Preaching Power, p. 120.

The average layman, to say nothing of the Unchurched, has only a vague idea of such terms as sanctification, regeneration, justification, atonement, Gospel, modernism, Romanism, and the like. This is not to imply that the layman could not give quite a satisfactory explanation of what these terms mean. The point here is that these abstract concepts just don't "talk" to the layman, nor for that matter even to the theologian. These terms have their proper place in Dogmatics text books and theological essays, but not in a sermon. A sermon should deal in concrete, vivid terms. The use of unfamiliar or abstract words will do much to discourage the unchurched visitor. The Unchurched will be especially grateful to the pastor who speaks "in their language." Thackeray, Dickens, and even Martin Luther held the interest of the common man because they "had the key to the street." To speak in the idiom of the common man does not imply the use of vulgar expressions. It simply requires a clear picturesque style. It is a good idea to make a list of good words which occur in the current literature and look at it from time to time. During the past war there were a good many words which made excellent sense to almost everyone. There were words like convoy, entrench, over-run, frontline, sentry, hoard, loneliness, strategy, sacrifice, blitz, infiltration. These are only a brief sample of words which to particular audiences were pregnant with meaning. Events do give meaning to words. Tell a

man that bereavement is a sad thing, and he will probably nod assent. He probably doesn't really understand. Tell the same thing to a man who has just lost his son or his wife, and he will probably agree, "Yes, it is a sad thing." There is a difference! The one understands and the other doesn't. There are words which at a given time paint a picture. The pastor who has mastered the art of turning an ear into an eye will find even the Unchurched coming to hear him.

Another method of achieving clarity and interest is the use of illustration. A sermon without any illustrations is quite likely to be too abstract. Both Jesus and Saint Paul used good illustrations. It is impossible here to go into a discussion of all the different types of illustrations, but there are a few essential facts which cannot be overlooked. Illustration is essential. People do not as a rule remember abstract truth. A sermon which deals only in abstractions is soon forgotten. The attention of people today is crowded with the visible and the concrete. Unless sermons are illustrated in terms of the visible and concrete, many people will be unable to remember what it was all about.

The question is often raised as to where illustrations should be used. No single answer can be given, but it is generally agreed that as a rule no illustrations should be used in the introduction and should be used only rarely

in the conclusion. The position of illustrations in the sermon is not of as much importance as is the function of the illustration in terms of the goal or plan. There should first be a literal sketch of the abstraction, then follows the illustration. The most important point and the one which is most often overlooked is capitalizing on the illustration. Often an illustration is given and no further use is made of it. When an illustration has made clear a doctrinal point, it is then that the real opportunity comes to make that illustration do a job. Every illustration should have a "follow-up." Illustration merely to amuse or embellish are out of place. It is not the number of illustrations which counts, but the appropriateness of those chosen, and the use which is made of them. Illustrations are not "filler" for the sermon, but they are a "tool." It does no good merely to lay the tool out before the audience. Before it can be regarded as worth while, it must do a job.

It is a good rule to reject the first illustration which comes to mind. It is probably too commonplace. Books of sermon illustrations as a rule prove quite useless. The real illustration comes from the imagination of the preacher and from his sense of what is real in the lives of his people. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and illustrations will be added unto you."⁵⁰

50. Hewitt, op. cit., p. 160.

A large proportion of the Unchurched are men. Just what the reason for this is is hard to say. The minister should preach to men. In his choice of illustrations the minister should use masculine illustrations. Saint Paul was expert in this. Let illustrations be taken from the man's world: the athletic illustrations, the architectural, the military, the historical, the political, the economic and the mechanical. If more sermons took illustrations from the man's world, there would be more husbands in church with their wives. In general, let it be remembered that men consider themselves practical people. Facts impress more than theories. Let the illustration be accurate with respect to detail! Let it be real!

Another device to achieve clarity in presentation is to preach powerful alternatives. A thing takes on a measure of clarity when it can be related to something else. The audience is constantly struggling for the proper perspective. If the minister can deftly outline two divergent courses of action, briefly analyze both and hold them forth to the audience, there can be only one choice. The audience is conscious that it itself has made a decision. The man in the pew has himself rejected the bad and chosen the good. The important thing is that he has done it for reasons which he himself understands. His conviction isn't the result of direct moralizing: "This is bad. This is good. Therefore choose the good." His conviction has risen from his own

deliberation. He himself has come to realize that one is the alternative of Satan and the other is the alternative of God. It is easy for a man to follow such a presentation.

Another device which aids in clarity and interest is the judicious use of interrogative sentences. A question will focus the attention squarely on the problem and will stimulate thought. A real question is not such a question as, "Should we not all therefore be thankful...?" The question should stimulate thought. Such a question as, "Why, why, does this happen? What's lying behind these things?" When attention is thus focused to the problem, a challenge is issued to the hearers to seek the solution, and at the same time they are perfectly clear as the point under discussion.

Another requisite for interesting preaching is a sharp and specific analysis of the text and its application. Shallow exposition and application to general needs falls short of the goal. To speak in general platitudes is uniformly fatal to interest. Specific doctrines must be related to specific situations in life. To preach directly to the needs of an audience requires deep study. It requires an analysis in many cases of the underlying causes for the basic needs of his hearers. Surface application is futile. Platitudes are shed like water from a duck's back. The application must get down to the fundamental problem. If the pastor fails to understand what this problem is, he is quite unable to deal with it adequately.

Another quality in preaching which will attract the Unchurched is sympathy. The minister should not take it for granted that his audience knows that he loves them. This fact should become immediately apparent from the very way he organizes his material. At no point in the development must there be the impression that the person is talking against the people. Of one preacher it was said that "He loves people into the kingdom of God." In order to carry this out practically, the minister must understand just what is going on in the mind of his hearer. He has to know how he thinks and just how the world looks to him. The very choice of words which the preacher uses will reflect his inner spirit. There has to be a genuine interest in people. "The same test of preaching ... is found in Dr. Fosdick's description of his usual revision of a written sermon, not for the purpose of polishing phrases--quite the contrary--for the purpose of discovering where, if at all, an interest in words has subordinated an interest in people."⁵¹

The next aspect of sermon structure which plays a direct part in winning the Unchurched is brevity. The Unchurched are not conditioned to sit for long periods of sermonic instruction. Any attempt to make them sit longer than their interest dictates results in an unpleasant experience. They want to get out and go home. Therefore the minister

51. Halford E. Incecock, In the Minister's Workshop, p. 68.

is wise who can judge how long he can hold interest, and then preach not quite that long. We can't compel people to come to church. If they leave with the feeling that the sermon was "too long," they will hesitate to return. It is best to leave them wanting more. Dr. McClure remarking one morning as he was about to conclude his sermon, that he had not really finished his subject and that he would therefore continue it the next Sunday. "I know that Dr. _____, when he was here, spoke for over an hour, but he didn't have to stay here as I do." The good attendance the next Sunday testified to the fact that Dr. McClure showed good judgement.

Brevity is not to be thought of only in terms of minutes. Brevity is coupled with movement and progression. By brevity is meant the opposite of wordiness. Some preachers habitually use ten words when six would do much better, or use a long paragraph where two sentences would achieve their purpose. After a sermon is written it is well for the author to go through it and ruthlessly strike out every word which is unnecessary. Sometimes whole sentences can be omitted, or phrases which contribute little or nothing. After this has been done, a wise plan is to have some good friend, a fellow minister, go through the sermon and weed out prolix statements which are not apparent to the author himself. A sermon "boiled down" in the way will invariably be five or six minutes shorter. That means five minutes

less tedious, 20% clearer, 20% faster progression, if we can tabulate these things at all in such a mechanical way. The point is that the quicker you can make your point, the better. Few sermons ever err by brevity. An old maxim has it; "The good if brief is doubly good. The bad, if there is little of it, is not so bad." One thing is certain; that from the point of view of attracting the Unchurched a sermon should make its point without carrying any excess baggage. It is surprising what an important element brevity is in the mind of the layman.

No sermon should be considered complete until a study has been made of the delivery. A good delivery will draw people. One can read the sermons of some of the great preachers of the past and be entirely unimpressed. Of Phillips Brooks it is said that one had to hear him to appreciate him. The basic fundamentals of speech are of really prime importance. It is trite to say that the preacher should speak loudly and distinctly, but it is nevertheless in place. Few sermons are ever too loud and none too distinct. Many an otherwise good delivery falls flat because it was not spoken with enough vim, vigor and vitality. All force is no good either. There should be places where the sermon glides along easily. Other places where it races, places where it plods methodically from one point to the next. There must be some places along the way where the audience can rest. Laymen cannot nor will not

listen to 20 minutes of difficult material without a rest. Above all there must be that cumulative emotional progression which leads the sermon to rise to its highest point of intensity and earnestness. The climax need not be loud or bombastic, but it should be clear, powerful and impressive.

The minister should radiate the joy of preaching. An opera singer who would sing as though singing was hard irksome work would soon be without a public and a job. Preaching is the minister's element, and it is a thrill to see a minister preaching and enjoying it. The idea is not that the minister should be constantly referring to the joy of Christian life with ecstatic exclamations, but that his whole manner will radiate the fact that he is supremely happy about the God-given opportunity to speak a message from God's Word.

The price of right preparation is small compared with the price of correct, impressive utterance. To stand well poised, majestic with the joy of preaching, meeting every eye, using only the inevitable gestures, to be eloquent with the right emphasis and spontaneous expression which moves the emotions deeply; to utter our thoughts so as to leave their naked strength irresistibly to the will ... what price??? Your entire personality. It is a spiritual price, paid wholly to Christ.⁵²

David Hume went to hear Whitefield preach in London. A friend asked him, "You surely don't believe what he says, do you?" Hume is reported to have replied, "No, but he

52. Hewitt, op. cit., p. 175.

does." Even the unbelieving will come to hear the man who has a real message and who speaks it with force and conviction.

The large proportion of the population in the United States are children under the age of 16 years. Recent figures indicate that there are about 17,000,000 children in the United States without any religious instruction. These children constitute the greatest single missionary challenge in the United States. These children must be reached with the Gospel. However, some action must be devised which will win these children for Christ. The best is always the simplest. Some practical solution must be found.

Fortunately, we have in our church a program already set up in model form, which if expanded to the full potential strength can reach large numbers of these children, as well as their unchurched parents. The one agency which leads itself to contacting these unchurched children and integrating them into the fold of Christ's Church is the Christian Day School. We have at present only a limited number of churches which have made use of their opportunities in a Christian Day School. The purpose is not here to discourse at length on the necessity for Christian Day Schools, but merely to point out that a Christian Day School is a foremost requirement in reaching the unchurched.

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VI. THE APPROACH THROUGH CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

A large proportion of the Unchurched in the United States are children under the age of 16 years. Recent figures indicate that there are about 17,000,000 children in the United States without any religious instruction. These children constitute the greatest single missionary challenge in the United States. These children must be reached with the Gospel! Somehow, some method must be devised which will win these children for Christ. The task is stupendous! Some practical solution must be found.

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In the first place it should be clear that we do not

in any sense lack for secular education. Quantitatively speaking we have more schools, larger schools, better staffed schools, more expensive and better equipped schools than ever before in history. In spite of this, education has failed to train the youth properly. Juvenile Delinquency has reached an all time high.

A plague of juvenile delinquency is sweeping the land. Our juvenile detention homes are crowded to overflowing. Our hospitals are filled with the youthful victims of the diseases of immorality. Law enforcement officers, from J. Edgar Hoover, Chief of the G-Men, to the chiefs of police in our humblest cities, have sounded the desperate alarm; hell has broken loose on the home front! The mothers of tomorrow are being made unfit for their God-given calling by the forces of debauchery loose in our land.⁵²

Education has failed to train the character of youth, not because we didn't have enough of it, but because it wasn't of the right kind. Christian education is not only a religious necessity, it is a social necessity. It is not the purpose here to enumerate the countless spiritual blessings of the parochial school. We are interested only in ascertaining the fact that widening circles of the non-Christian world are becoming aware of the fact that secular education definitely fails to train the whole man. The theories of progressive education have made their little contributions, and words such as "integration," "self-expression," and "orientation" are flung about as though they were magic keys to educational success. In spite of

⁵². Dan Gilbert, The Truth About Juvenile Delinquency, p. 9.

the best efforts of secular education the results achieved are dismal.

More and more people are coming to recognize that something is definitely lacking in the secular character training of the youth. The Unchurched certainly are not greatly concerned with spiritual values, but they are concerned that their children shall be fine, upright citizens. In this fact lies a unique opportunity for the church which is willing to take on the added responsibilities of Christian Education.

The future of the church lies in a large measure with the youth. The older folks, apart from being quite set in their ways and habits, soon disappear from the scene. All political ideologies in recent years have taken cognizance of the fact that youth training is fundamental. Christian education should become the general rule for congregations. Those which are too small to support a school of their own, can in many cases consolidate with other congregations. Christian education is a necessity first of all for the children of the congregation. They alone warrant the cost of such a venture, but when the tremendous mission possibilities of a parish school are realized there can be no doubt that the congregation has a mission opportunity right at its front door.

It will not be deemed necessary here to discuss at length the value of Christian Day School training. A

school where the love for Christ is the basic motivation of the instructor, and where children are taught the implications of the Gospel for Christian life, is one of the highest blessings God can bestow upon any group of children. Some effects of Christian training evidence themselves even to the most casual observer. Even unchurched people notice the difference in character training in a Christian Day School. It is not uncommon for non-Christian parents to come to the pastor with the request to enroll a son or daughter in the school, because "we just can't do a thing with them at home." We definitely have something in our Christian Day Schools, and large numbers of the Unchurched realize this fact. In this realization there is a wonderful mission opportunity for us.

Most unchurched parents will be willing to send their children to a parochial school, if the school is really a good one and the approach is properly made. Often people who themselves never attend church send their children to a parochial school because "religion never hurts anybody." In presenting the matter to the Unchurched, the purely cultural and ethical values of the parochial school should be fully explained, but no attempt should be made to minimize the spiritual values. The Unchurched might not care to send their children for spiritual values alone, but by calling attention to the very core and heart of the instruction, testimony is given to the parent as well that "secular

education is not enough" ... for them either.

Another mission possibility in the parochial school is that the children themselves are missionaries and witnesses for Christ. Often it would have been futile to appeal to non-Christians to come to church. They had no time for church. Church had been pushed way back into a dusty nook of their minds. It occupied no place in their thinking. Even with such people it is sometimes quite an easy matter to get them to send their children to the parochial school. The children bring religion into that home. It is unavoidable that conversation will center from time to time about religious subjects, about the church, about the Christmas program, about religious services. The children are interested in the church. The parents are interested in the children. In due time the parents too take an interest in the activities of the church and the pastor is in a position to win them for actual church membership. Such experiences are not rare exceptions. They happen every day in churches where the pastor, teachers and congregation have resolved to make their parochial school a mission agency. Some congregations will worry about the expense of teaching the children of people who do little or nothing to support the school. It must be admitted that to make a parochial school a mission agency definitely does require more money, but it's worth it! In the course of years the increased church membership will more than pay for the added expenditure. The church which

VII. THE SUCCESS OF THE WORK.

As missionaries of our Lord Jesus Christ we have one duty and one privilege, to bring men everywhere to the knowledge of the "good news." The message which we speak is a powerful message, sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit.⁵³ We are engaged in the process of sowing the seed. We can sow the seed, we can water it and stand guard that outside forces do not steal the seed away, but we cannot make it grow. The power of growth is within the seed itself. Thus it is with the Word of God. "God giveth the increase."⁵⁴ He has given us His promise that His Word shall not return unto Him void. The truly remarkable thing is how literally that promise has been fulfilled even far beyond all expectation. When we saw that handful of men on a Palestinian hill, gazing up into heaven after their Lord's ascension, and we saw them in all their weaknesses and frailties we wondered what these feeble hands would accomplish in a hostile world. But then as we see rising from the labors of those hands the mighty Christian Church of all ages and all lands, we know that it is not man's church, but Christ's church; not man's building,

53. Hebrews 4; 12.

54. 1 Cor. 3; 7.

but God's building. It is a great comfort to the Christian evangelist in times like these, when hostile forces appear about to engulf the whole Christian Church, that he is engaged in a victorious campaign. Anti-Christian forces may certainly succeed in destroying his church organization, but they shall never be able to destroy the true Christian Church. Christian churches may perish and clergymen may be slain, but the great invisible Christian Church remains. "The Word they still shall let remain," Luther exclaims, "Nor any thank have for it. He's by our side upon the plain, With His good gift and Spirit."

It is well to remember this fact. It is easy for one to become despondent when one views the foes menacing Christ's Church, and the feeling comes, "What's the use? We shall sow the seed, only to find that soon enemies have rooted it out and destroyed it." This will never come to pass! That there will be persecutions of the church in the last times, is plain from Scripture, but the seed which we sow shall take root and grow. What large yields the Lord will yet receive from the seed we have sown is not clear to us. Often our efforts appear small. Our audiences are small. Our instruction classes are small. It is well to bear in mind that Christ also had a small audience. The sermon on the new birth was preached to one man who came to Him by night.⁵⁵ The sermon on the water of life was preached to one socially

55. John 3; 1.

outcast woman.⁵⁶ It is said that one evening, years ago in England, church services were being held in a small mission chapel. Time for the service found only 12 people in attendance. The minister himself had failed to show up. Some obscure preacher, whose name has not come down to us, got up and preached a plain Gospel sermon. That sermon may not have seemed so important to the pastor who preached it, but it was important! Seated among those 12 people was a 16 year old boy, who in that very service made a decision to be a minister for Christ. Charles H. Spurgeon pointed back to that sermon as the time of his conversion to Christian faith! Spurgeon, the man who under the guiding hand of God was destined to preach the Gospel to thousands of souls.

There is no place for defeatism in this glorious task. Though our labors appear small and insignificant in comparison to the great social and political currents of our time, yet we have the assurance that our "labour is not in vain in the Lord."⁵⁷ Each person led to Christ may in turn lead others, and who is able to see the end of these things? Though cruel enemies seek to destroy the church from within and without, yet we have the Word of the Living God that the gates of hell shall not prevail against His church.⁵⁸ It is the great comfort of the evangelist that results are

56. John 4; 5.

57. 1 Cor. 15; 58.

58. Matthew 16; 18.

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