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Short Title

INSPIRATIONAL QUALITY IN PREACHING

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty
of Columbia University, in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Divinity

by
Orlan Walter Lee
June 1918

Approved by: Blair H. Hooper
John H. Gifford

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE
TO THE "INSPIRATIONAL" QUALITY
IN CHRISTIAN PREACHING

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

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Orlen Walter Lapp

June 1958

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CHAPTER I

THE INTRODUCTION

The Definition

In Christian circles the word "inspiration" is nearly always used in reference to the work of the Holy Spirit. In this sense it is used to describe the Holy Spirit's influence which qualifies men to receive and communicate divine truth. This is not the understanding of "inspiration" as it is used in this thesis. There can be no doubt that the working of the Holy Spirit through the message of the Gospel is a vital factor for inspiring human hearts. The activity of the Spirit is not denied; it is taken for granted.

The objective of this paper is not to view "inspiration" by its theological meaning but to consider it as a human element, which quality is peculiar not solely to Christian preaching. Non-believers, orators, and politicians who do not speak the message of the Gospel often have this gift of conveying an "inspirational quality" into the hearts of the hearers. Even in the realm of art, especially in music, this quality is frequently conveyed. Donald Miller¹ described both Fritz Kreisler and Yehudi Menuhin as

¹Donald G. Miller, The Way to Biblical Preaching (New York: Abingdon Press, c.1957), pp. 143-4.

musicians who were capable at times of transmitting this intangible quality of "inspiration" which was able to dig down into the corners of the soul.

This thesis concerns itself with the human element that contributes to the "inspirational" quality in Christian preaching. Everyone who has listened to Christian preaching has, on some occasion, felt the thrill of being "inspired." Although the experience of this "inspirational" quality is universal, yet an exact definition as to its nature and component parts is difficult. We are dealing with an intangible quality. Since it is impossible exactly to define the quality of "inspiration" in Christian preaching, a clearer understanding of its use in this thesis will be achieved by some affirmative and negative statements about it.

As the term is used in this paper, it is used to describe that quality which warms the heart of the hearers and causes them for a moment or successive moments to experience through imagination, reason, and emotion the sensation of chills pricking the spine. It describes the momentary state of being intellectually and emotionally moved. In an attempt to define this subject homileticians use various expressions. Each expression if taken separately seems inadequate, but when all are taken together, they are helpful in presenting a better understanding of the subject. Some men describe this "inspirational quality" as the

"creative spark," "heart warming preaching," "thrilling the soul" and as being "the extra plus" in preaching.

As the phrase "inspirational quality" is used in this thesis, it is not to be equated with emotions per se. It cannot be denied that emotions do play a significant role both in creating and in transmitting this quality. However, the inspirational quality cannot be neatly identified as belonging to the emotional appeal in contrast to the rational appeal. Although the emotions are intrinsically a part of this quality, the mental activity dare never be absent. All of the higher responses of man spring from and affect the total man, his mind and emotions.

The inspirational quality is not to be thought of as synonymous with persuasion. It is possible for a person to be both intellectually and emotionally persuaded and yet not be inspired. The purpose of persuasion is to induce belief or influence conduct; inspiration may be considered a part of the total concept of persuasion. Since this paper does not treat the subject of persuasion, all attempt has been made to avoid references which refer merely to persuasion in the narrow sense.

After having attempted to describe the subject from both the affirmative and negative aspects, the writer must say a word in regard to the actual purpose of this thesis. The quest of this thesis is to investigate the factors that contribute to the inspirational quality in preaching. It is

an investigation of the elements, constituent parts, and fundamental features of this quality. It needs to be repeated that the factors of persuasion, communication, and appeals are not the goal of this paper.

The word "authorities" will of necessity be repeated often in the following pages. Thus an understanding as to what is meant by authorities is in place at this time. In general those are called authorities who have distinguished themselves through their preaching ability and homiletical knowledge. In most cases the authorities are those men who have published books dealing with homiletics, lectured at the Divinity School of Yale University, or have become recognized as outstanding Christian preachers.

The Limitations

Although this study tends to be objective, yet it must be admitted that from the nature of the subject both the observation and the evaluation are limited to the subjective judgment of the author.

As was previously stated, no clear definition of this inspirational quality can be determined. Thus the mere gathering of material becomes subjective. Each authority to be quoted describes this quality in terms that are often peculiar to himself. In order to gather and organize the material relating to this subject, the author of this thesis honestly attempted to determine whether or not the material

of the authorities intended to speak to the subject at hand.

Another limitation was the lack of research material available on this subject. There was no single volume or chapter found that undertook a discussion of this subject as a whole. Because of this dearth of material, a discussion of this subject together with its causal factors cannot be neatly analyzed and classified as one might expect when dealing with subjects like persuasion, emotions, and communications. The authorities seemed to regard this subject as virgin soil; many of them ignored it altogether. A minority of the authorities spent a few sentences or a paragraph admitting the existence of this quality but then only briefly or vaguely discussed its causal factors.

Another limitation of this thesis is the fact that it does not consider the varying audience factor in the body of the thesis. Admittedly, the individual in the audience with his sensitivities and memory is an important factor to be considered in this total process. This fact can be illustrated by considering the example of Jesus and Paul. On one occasion Jesus' words thrilled and warmed the hearts of those who heard Him; even His enemies were compelled to exclaim, "Never man spake like this man."² On another occasion His words aroused the animosity of those who heard Him.

²John 7:46

The example of Paul is similar. It is recorded in Acts 13 that while Paul preached in Antioch of Pisidia, many people pressed about him and were thrilled by his message. On another occasion, Paul, the inspiring preacher, lulled Eutychus into a deep sleep.

This thesis does not presume to answer all the problems involved. It focuses its attention upon the main factors, from the preacher's point of view, that contribute to the inspirational quality in preaching. At best this thesis is the turning of one furrow in a vast field of study.

The Method

The lack of material together with the variation in terminology by the various authorities has to a great degree determined the method to be followed. As previously stated, no single volume or chapter has been found where this subject is treated extensively. This thesis can only set down what the authorities say about the subject. Thus the bulk of this paper is composed of quotations drawn from scattered references where it is felt that the author has referred directly or indirectly to this problem.

Since this report can only list in a somewhat orderly fashion how the authorities regard the inspirational quality, many references and quotations will have to be cited. This procedure necessitates more quotations than would perhaps otherwise be desirable. However, the writer is of the conviction that this is the only procedure that will be fair

to the respective authorities who speak to this subject and also be of greatest benefit to the readers of this thesis.

The second chapter contains what the authorities have stated in regard to inspiration in preaching in a general way. The third chapter sets forth what the authorities have to say about the first area of investigation, namely the preacher and his personality. It is felt that Christian character, absolute conviction, and the earnest desire to help people are essential. The fourth chapter contains a report of how the authorities regard the sermon's effect upon inspirational preaching. For additional clarity selected samples from the sermons of some great inspirational preachers are also included in this chapter.

been divided capable of creating the power of a noble spirit to inspire other men to righteousness. . . . Phillip Brooks also was hesitant in attempting to define this subject. He found the thought difficult to express in words.

I speak of only one thing more. I do not know how to give it a name, but I do think that in every man who preaches there should be something of that quality which we recognize in a high degree in some men of whom we say, when we see him in the pulpit, that he is a "born preacher." Call it enthusiasm; call it eloquence; call it magnetism; call it the gift for preaching. It is the quality that kindles. . . .

Donald G. Miller, The Key To Effective Preaching (New York: Abingdon Press, c.1977), p. 154.

John Nicholls Booth, The Quest For Preaching Power (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943), p. 279.

Herbert Barrett Parker, The Heart of the Tale Lectures (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1934), p. 49.

CHAPTER II

THE QUALITY OF "INSPIRATION" VIEWED BY AUTHORITIES

Definitions

Most of the authorities who grappled with this intangible force of the inspirational quality in preaching recognized the difficulty of their task. In the last chapter of his book Donald Miller, speaking of this quality, said, "it is a mystery which can be experienced, but which can hardly be put into words."¹ Booth was also aware of the difficult task connected with any attempt to define or analyze this subject. He commented: "No measuring instrument has ever been devised capable of gauging the power of a noble spirit to inspire other men to righteousness."² Phillips Brooks also was hesitant in attempting to define this subject. He found the thought difficult to express in words.

I speak of only one thing more. I do not know how to give it a name, but I do think that in every man who preaches there should be something of that quality which we recognize in a high degree in some man of whom we say, when we see him in the pulpit, that he is a "horn preacher." Call it enthusiasm; call it eloquence; call it magnetism; call it the gift for preaching. It is the quality that kindles. . . .³

¹Donald G. Miller, The Way To Biblical Preaching (New York: Abingdon Press, c.1957), p. 143.

²John Nicholls Booth, The Quest For Preaching Power (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943), p. 229.

³Batsell Barrett Baxter, The Heart of the Yale Lectures (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1954), p. 49.

Vinet, being less hesitant, uses picture language to describe this quality in physical terms. He says "it is the power of making the primitive chords of the soul (its purely human elements) vibrate within us. . ."⁴ Perhaps the most complete definition of the subject is that given by Kirkpatrick. In a somewhat technical way he states that the feeling of inspiration occurs in preaching when the hearer receives the feeling that he is brought face to face with reality. His definition is so complete and compact that it warrants re-reading:

In inspired preaching the Divine Reality finds a perfect, or well-nigh perfect, channel of expression; the speaker's powers of perception, reaction, and expression function in one grand harmony as a result of the full and free surrender of himself to the Divine control, and the hearer feels that he is brought face to face with the Divine Reality.⁵

The Importance and Effect

Both the importance and the power of this quality in effective preaching was recognized by many authorities. In their first chapter Perry and Whitesell mention inspiration as one of the aims in preaching:

⁴John A. Broadus, A Treatise On The Preparation and Delivery of Sermons (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, c.1895), p. 22.

⁵Robert White Kirkpatrick, The Creative Delivery of Sermons (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944), p. 230.

Then there is the need for inspiration, to set on fire the knowledge people have, to stir up lagging spirits, to infuse new courage and faith into fainting hearts. Inspiration is basic to enlistment.⁶

Sleeth,⁷ stressing the importance of this quality, insists that effective preaching must warm the hearts of the hearers.

Both W. M. Taylor⁸ and Charles Reynolds Brown,⁹ who lectured to the divinity students at Yale, affirm that the task of the preacher is to "stir the hearts and kindle the imagination of the audience."

Stressing once again the value of this quality, Broadus says that the mark of the truly great preacher is one who can "touch every chord of human feeling."¹⁰ Speaking of the same ability, Vinet adds, "it is in this, and nothing else that we acknowledge the orator."¹¹

⁶Farris D. Whitesell and Lloyd M. Perry, Variety in Your Preaching (Westwood, N. J.: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1954), p. 24.

⁷Ronald E. Sleeth, Persuasive Preaching (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1956), p. 45.

⁸Baxter, op. cit., p. 217.

⁹Ibid., p. 261.

¹⁰Authur H. Smith, Preachers and Preaching (Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, 1925), p. 15.

¹¹Broadus, op. cit., p. 22.

Two Areas of Study Recognized

The majority of the authorities recognize that there are two areas that must be considered as one searches for the factors in inspirational preaching. The factors fall into two classes--one group refers to the preacher and his personality; the other refers to the sermon or the word symbols used. Little or no effort is made by the authorities, as they discuss the factors of inspiration, to separate the delivery from the personality, or the style from the content of the sermon.

Reu poses for himself the question, "What makes it possible for the sermon to touch, in so intimate a manner, the whole soul-life of a man?" In attempting to answer his own question, he reveals that both preacher and the sermon are factors to be considered.¹²

Broadus recognized that both in the person and in his words lay the potential for conveying the thrill of inspiration to the hearers. When the preacher is stirred or feels deeply about his subject, he automatically conveys his feelings by the "inexplicable contagion of sympathy." Often the same emotions are aroused in the hearers through empathy. This he describes as the direct means of conveying inspiration.

¹²M. Reu, Homiletics, translated from the German by Albert Steinhaeuser (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, c.1924), pp. 119-20.

Other than the effect of the preacher himself, Broadus says that one can inspire feeling in others only by indirect means. By the use of indirect means he is referring to the sermon. Through the use of concrete imaginative word pictures the sensation of inspiration is often awakened in the mind of the hearers.¹³

Both Baxter¹⁴ and Garrison¹⁵ recognize the man and the message as being important factors in inspirational preaching. The effect of the spirit-filled man gains further impact by the use of dynamic, imaginative language in the sermon.

Kirkpatrick is perhaps the most emphatic in stressing the need for a consideration of both elements, and he is also the most clear as to the distinctive relevance of these two areas of study. Whenever there is an emotional response, there are two modes of expression that contribute to its cause. The sermon, which can be reduced to symbols and words, appeals through the imagination to the intellect. The impact of the personality of the preacher defies reduction to symbols, and it has largely to do with the emotions. To illustrate the point that both words and the preacher's personality convey feeling, Kirkpatrick cites the sentence

¹³Broadus, op. cit., pp. 237-38.

¹⁴Baxter, op. cit., p. 28.

¹⁵Webb B. Garrison, The Preacher And His Audience (Westwood, N. J.: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1954), p. 231.

"you are a fine friend" as an example. The word symbols in this sentence convey a thought. However, the meaning of this sentence can be completely reversed simply by the tone that the speaker uses when speaking these words. The emotional factor in the preacher himself is more important than the words when it comes to conveying this inspirational quality to hearers.¹⁶

Although the emotional impact of the preacher is felt to be more important by Kirkpatrick, yet he points out that the greatest intensity and frequency of inspiration is achieved when the joint impact of the personality and the words re-inforce, support, and strengthen one another.¹⁷

The authorities definitely regard two areas as playing an important role in creating the inspirational quality in preaching. Kirkpatrick gives a fitting summary to this thought. In inspirational preaching the minister "wishes his congregation to sense in his person (emotionally), as well as in his words (intellectually), the reality he is endeavoring to transmit."¹⁸

¹⁶Kirkpatrick, op. cit., pp. 45-7.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 49.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 82.

CHAPTER III

"INSPIRATIONAL" FACTORS IN THE PREACHER

The Importance of Personality

The greatest persuasive force known among men is that of personality.¹

Nearly all the authorities on speech would agree with Baxter's statement as they devote sections or full chapters to a discussion of the speaker's personality. Thus, this quotation sets the stage for the recognition of the importance of personality in inspirational preaching. This impact of soul upon soul is nearly the key to inspirational preaching.

Many of the authorities, including ancient Cicero, recognized that the power for moving men was in the speaker. He said that any success in moving the hearts of men was not due to talent or skill but to a mighty fire that burned in the soul of the speaker.²

Both Farmer³ and Booth,⁴ in their respective books, express the thought that the message can never inspire unless

¹Batsell Barrett Baxter, The Heart of the Yale Lectures (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1954), p. 26.

²John A. Broadus, A Treatise On The Preparation and Delivery of Sermons (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, c.1895), p. 236.

³Herbert H. Farmer, The Servant Of The Word (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942), p. 90.

⁴John Nicholls Booth, The Quest For Preaching Power (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943), p. 228.

it is stamped by the intangible quality of him who speaks it.

Phillips Brooks does not use the word "inspiration," but he gives classic expression to the importance of the personality in effective preaching:

Truth through Personality is our description of real preaching. The truth must come really through the person, not merely over his lips, not merely into his understanding and out through his pen. It must come through his character, his affections, his whole intellectual and moral being. It must come genuinely through him.⁵

Smith recognizes that the true power of the sermon rests in the Gospel truth itself and in the operating presence of the Holy Spirit, but he feels that the personality of the preacher has a strange power within itself either to mar or to make effective the message. The man behind the sermon is a vital factor in inspirational influence.⁶

Both Reu⁷ and Sleeth⁸ add their testimony to the fact that the vital power for moving men's hearts rests in the kindled heart of the preacher himself.

⁵Baxter, op. cit., p. 17.

⁶Authur H. Smith, Preachers and Preaching (Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, 1925), p. 122.

⁷M. Reu, Homiletics, translated from the German by Albert Steinhäuser (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, c.1924), p. 81.

⁸Ronald K. Sleeth, Persuasive Preaching (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1956), p. 23.

Kirkpatrick feels that the preacher is the most important factor in creating the condition under which inspired preaching is most likely to occur. He expresses the importance and function of the minister in a precise and somewhat technical manner:

inspired preaching occurs when his powers of logical perception, emotional reaction, and psychophysical expression function in superb harmony, while his entire being is freely surrendered to the Divine control.⁹

Judging from the many references of the authorities, the personality of the preacher is considered to be the greatest single factor affecting inspirational preaching.

The thesis having stated the importance of the personality, it will now be necessary to investigate those qualities of the preacher's personality which are most influential in arousing the inspirational effect upon the hearts of the hearers. Baxter records that this effective power in the preacher's personality defies analysis. He then says "the closest approach to a satisfactory analysis of his power results from a study of his many characteristics," because he concludes that "his personality is the sum total of all his individual qualities."¹⁰

⁹Robert White Kirkpatrick, The Creative Delivery of Sermons (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944), p. 213.

¹⁰Baxter, op. cit., pp. 25-6.

Many of the authorities also expressed an inability to define the elements in the personality which contribute to the inspirational quality of the preacher. However, most of them, as did Baxter, pointed out those qualities which are most often present in the preacher who is inspirational.

Character

By repetition and emphasis the authorities give primacy to character in the list of personal qualities necessary for inspirational preaching. Character is used here in a broad sense; it includes personal piety, exemplary conduct, righteousness of life, and in a general way describes the devout Christian who is walking in the Spirit.

Broadus lists piety as the first of four requisites to effective preaching. He states that the effect of the speaker's character upon the force of the message was known and expressed years ago. Quintilean puts forth the axiom: "An orator is a good man, skilled in speaking."¹¹

While lecturing to the divinity students at Yale University, Charles E. Jefferson attributed the preacher's pulpit power to his character. He described it as "the one thing essential in a preacher." This, he feels, is the force which causes words to penetrate and to kindle a divine fire in the hearers.¹²

¹¹Broadus, op. cit., pp. 21-3.

¹²Baxter, op. cit., p. 23.

Both Robert F. Horton¹³ and James Freeman agree that a "Christly character" in the preacher helps to inspire the audience. Freeman¹⁴ expresses character in terms of a "divinely gifted personality":

It is safe to say that there has been no great preacher who has given men an inspiration to live, who has not infused into his every utterance something of his own divinely gifted personality.

Smith¹⁵ describes character as an inner life of love and sacrificial unselfishness which is achieved through an intimate relationship with God. John Brown, who delivered the Yale Lectures at the turn of the century, also spoke of character as consisting of a close communion with God. He noted its importance in transmitting the inspirational quality to others:

there is no substitute for this power and no other way of getting it. It is the soul that has caught fire from the altar which sets other souls on fire.¹⁶

James Freeman describes character as a deep consciousness of God. This quality he describes as an irresistible force in moving an audience:

¹³Ibid., p. 35.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁵Smith, op. cit., p. 134.

¹⁶Baxter, op. cit., p. 219.

There is a mysterious and undefinable quality that inheres in the man who possesses in a large degree the God-consciousness. He may lack many gifts and graces . . . but once we come into his presence and listen to his message we feel the force of his personality, the indescribable spell of his genius and the irresistible power of his utterance.¹⁷

Jowett,¹⁸ Sleeth¹⁹ and Garrison²⁰ mention how the upright example of the preacher is an influence in moving the hearers. The preacher must be a man who is constantly looking Godward; he must be a man who is growing in spiritual graces. It is doubtful whether his preaching of God's grace will ever be more effective in moving others than it has been in his own life. The preacher can never push men to a higher spiritual level than he is on himself.

Phillips Brooks talks about personal piety as being a vital force contributing to inspirational preaching. For Brooks, personal piety is a primary qualification for inspiring the hearts of people:

It is personal piety, a deep possession in one's own soul of the faith and hope and resolution which he is to offer to his fellow-men for their new life. Nothing but fire kindles fire.²¹

¹⁷Ibid., p. 33.

¹⁸J. H. Jowett, The Preacher: His Life And Work (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1912), p. 35.

¹⁹Sleeth, op. cit., p. 22.

²⁰Webb B. Garrison, The Preacher And His Audience (Westwood, N. J.: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1954), p. 42.

²¹Baxter, op. cit., pp. 31-2.

It is felt by most of the authorities that the Christian character of the preacher is a prime requisite to inspirational preaching. This quality inspires the preacher himself with ardent zeal. His genuineness, example, and warm heart gains for him the good-will and the sympathy of the hearers; they respect him and are often moved by his character.

Conviction

Another important quality in the preacher's personality which is closely akin to character is conviction, or sincerity. In this thesis no distinction will be made between conviction and sincerity. Conviction is vital to inspirational preaching. Without this quality it becomes doubtful whether the preacher can consistently inspire his audience. Dale Carnegie expressed the need for sincerity in these words:

Regardless of the pretty phrases a man may concoct; regardless of the illustrations he may assemble; regardless of the harmony of his voice and the grace of his gestures; if he does not speak sincerely, these are hollow and glittering trappings. If you would impress an audience, first be impressed yourself. Your spirit, shining through your eyes, radiating through your voice, and proclaiming itself through your manner, will communicate itself to your auditors.²²

²²Kenneth Lee Frerking, "The Psychology of Persuasive Preaching with special Reference to the Campus Ministry" (Unpublished Bachelor's Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1957), p. 92.

Speaking of the importance of sincerity, Smith says that people can be set on fire by sincere warmth of feeling and conviction of truth. He admits that it is reality alone that stirs the hearts of men; however he feels that it is through the positive conviction and transparent sincerity that reality is most often conveyed to the congregation.²³

Edwin DuBose Mouzon, in his lecture to the students at Yale, mentioned sincerity as a requisite quality of the preacher. He also notes that this quality has the capacity for infusing itself into the hearts of the hearers:

First, there must be sincerity. The preacher is a communicator. His convictions pass in some strange way over into the minds of his hearers. . . . If he is a man of strong faith, his faith will flow down into others. The first requisite, then, is absolute honesty on the part of the preacher.²⁴

Sleeth,²⁵ Bowie,²⁶ and Farmer²⁷ stress the importance of the preacher's becoming thoroughly absorbed in the truth of the sermon until that truth has got hold of him. Without this consecrated spirit the preacher cannot be effective in inspiring others.

²³Smith, op. cit., pp. 114-5

²⁴Baxter, op. cit., p. 41.

²⁵Sleeth, op. cit., p. 22.

²⁶Walter Russell Bowie, Preaching (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), p. 13.

²⁷Farmer, op. cit., p. 33

William DeWitt Hyde comments in his Yale lectures that sincerity carries more force in moving an audience than all elaborate logical arguments or calculated emotional appeals. He says "the confident assertion of a man who is transparently sincere with himself, carries weight with all who see and feel his sincerity."²⁸

Reu also speaks of sincerity as being important in moving the hearts of men. If the preacher speaks "from the depths of his own heart, he will find the way to other hearts and become to them a fountain of living water."²⁹

Speaking on the importance of sincerity, Henry Ward Beecher added this comment:

if you are speaking the truth, it is essential that those who hear you believe you are sincere before you can work with them.³⁰

Thus, true conviction is considered by the authorities to be the second most important quality of the preacher's personality which contributes to the inspirational quality in preaching. It is important to note at this point that conviction must be genuine. There is no room for pretense of conviction or fanaticism. Sincerity is not to be thought of as a mere sentimental emotion. The conviction or sincerity must flow naturally from the preacher as the true expression of what he thinks and feels. This true conviction

²⁸Baxter, op. cit., pp. 41-2.

²⁹Reu, op. cit., p. 76.

³⁰Baxter, op. cit., p. 42.

is carried by word and observation to the hearer. It kindles his imagination and arouses the emotions which aids in making possible the thrilling sensation of being inspired.³¹

Earnestness

Earnestness is closely related to the previous two qualities discussed. Character reflects the preacher's life; conviction reflects the preacher's attitude toward his message; earnestness reflects the preacher's attitude toward the people. The authorities regard earnestness or enthusiasm as another important factor in the personality of the preacher that contributes to the inspirational quality.

Blackwood speaks of earnestness as a fire in the heart of the preacher, which will naturally flow into other hearts and cause them to burn.³²

Both Garrison³³ and Broadus³⁴ state that enthusiasm in communication is vital to inspirational preaching. If the pastor is to excite feeling in others, he must feel deeply himself.

Charles S. Horne, George W. Pepper, and H. W. Beecher in their lectures to the divinity students of Yale empha-

³¹Broadus, op. cit., p. 20.

³²Andrew Watterson Blackwood, The Preparation of Sermons (Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948), pp. 203-4.

³³Garrison, op. cit., p. 217.

³⁴Broadus, op. cit., p. 236.

sized the need for enthusiasm and also described it as a power that could move men's hearts. Horne³⁵ said, "the one supreme qualification for the ministry is a soul of flame." Both Beecher³⁶ and Pepper³⁷ spoke of enthusiasm as a moving force that quickly communicates itself and "inoculates" people.

Genuine earnestness is recognized as a factor contributing to the inspirational quality in preaching, but earnestness will not be effective if it is employed as an end in itself. Neither earnestness nor inspiration is to be the goal of preaching. Enthusiasm must flow naturally from the preacher's own awareness of the wonder of his message and from a concern to communicate to others. Farmer points out that the prime function of the preacher is to convey truth. The desire to communicate is one of the natural stimulants for earnestness. Thus, any manufactured or artificial enthusiasm will never be effective. If the preacher parades a false front of earnestness, it will soon be detected and hinder his cause.³⁸

This genuine earnestness in preaching ought to be prompted not only by the desire to communicate, but also by

³⁵Baxter, op. cit., p. 49.

³⁶Ibid., p. 48.

³⁷Ibid., p. 50.

³⁸Farmer, op. cit., pp. 77-80.

a deep love and concern for people. Love, understanding, and a real concern for the betterment of the hearers will generate the true enthusiasm which is so necessary. Charles Reynolds Brown expressed it picturesquely when he said that just seeing a congregation ought to cause the preacher "to kindle and burn like a steel wire ignited in pure oxygen."³⁹

Both Smith⁴⁰ and Broadus⁴¹ recognize that enthusiasm cannot be produced by the preacher's own will; it must rise naturally from the preacher's love for people and from his desire to share his message. His passion for souls and his desire to communicate God's grace compels the preacher to enthusiasm.

Bowie was also aware of the need for love and understanding on the part of an inspirational preacher. He stressed the importance for the preacher to "look upon people with a sensitive understanding."⁴²

Kirkpatrick explains that this love for people and this desire to share the message is very important in creating the feeling of reality.⁴³ As previously noted, Kirkpatrick

³⁹Baxter, op. cit., p. 49.

⁴⁰Smith, op. cit., p. 135.

⁴¹Broadus, op. cit., p. 237.

⁴²Bowie, op. cit., p. 41.

⁴³Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 63.

defines inspirational preaching as that which brings the hearer to experience the reality of the truth being presented.⁴⁴

Jowett feels sure that love for people which prompts the enthusiasm to communicate is the secret of inspiring men. If we know, respect, and love people, "we have got the key into the lock which will open their most secret gate."⁴⁵

Several of the authorities warned against two negative character traits which impede inspirational preaching. These two traits are the very antithesis of love for people and a concern to help people. The first of these is selfishness. Broadus⁴⁶ points out that all egotism and selfish care are destructive of imagination. It must be remembered that for Broadus the "imagination" was a necessity in inspirational preaching. In addition, the egotistic preacher smothers enthusiasm because he is not primarily concerned about loving and helping people.

Another negative factor which hinders the creation and communication of the inspirational quality is self-consciousness. It is nearly impossible for the self-conscious preacher to transmit reality. His focus of concentration is upon

⁴⁴Supra, p. 9.

⁴⁵Jowett, op. cit., p. 222.

⁴⁶Broadus, op. cit., p. 401.

himself and upon his own emotional status, and not upon the message and the people.⁴⁷ In this regard, Sleeth points out the need for emotional stability in the preacher if he is to be successful in moving the audience:

by and large, a healthy emotional life is necessary if he is to be persuasive, for he is revealing himself and is communicating on that level as upon the verbal level.⁴⁸

⁴⁷Kirkpatrick, op. cit., pp. 220-21.

⁴⁸Sleeth, op. cit., p. 60.

CHAPTER IV

"INSPIRATIONAL" FACTORS IN THE SERMON

The Importance of the Sermon

No matter how exalted the inspiration of the preacher, he moves no one until he communicates by words. In addition to the personality of the preacher, the second major factor contributing to inspiration in preaching is the words used in the sermon. The inspiration quality cannot be communicated by the preacher apart from his use of words. The messenger and his message are indissolubly one as their combined force is felt by the hearer. "Preaching and message are one organic whole as man's body and spirit are one organic whole."¹

The authorities recognize the importance of the sermon as a factor in inspirational preaching. Garrison reminds his reader, "there can be no real eloquence without great ideas." No matter how forceful a personality, if he stands silent in the pulpit he will not inspire men. The first requisite in preaching is that the preacher has something to say.²

¹Herbert H. Farmer, The Servant Of The Word (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942), p. 14.

²Webb B. Garrison, The Preacher And His Audience (Westwood, N. J.: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1954), pp. 18-20.

Words are, as Henry Ward Beecher put it, "pegs to hang ideas on."³

J. N. Booth also realized that it was not only the impact of the personality that moved men, but that words also have the power to stir hearts. "When words paint a scene so lucid and clearcut that the listener sees a picture in his own imagination the emotions are stirred."⁴

Reality

The words of the sermon are important, but they are not an end in themselves. If the sermon is to be a factor contributing to the inspirational quality, it must seek to be more than a mere arrangement of facts and ideas.

Most of the authorities speak of the sermon's objective as being that of conveying reality to the hearers. It is in this and not in the shell of the words that there is power to inspire men. Donald G. Miller realized this fact when he said:

The power to move men goes beyond the mere words one uses, beyond all techniques which can be consciously acquired, beyond all striving for effect. The masters in the art of speech know the difference between success and failure at this point.⁵

³E. Schuyler English, Robert G. Lee (Grand Rapids 2, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1949), p. 291.

⁴John Nicholls Booth, The Quest For Preaching Power (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943), pp. 96-7.

⁵Donald G. Miller, The Way To Biblical Preaching (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957), pp. 144-5.

Thus, the sermon or words are not the cause of inspiration but serve as a necessary aid in stimulating it. The truth must come alive; the combination of words used can either help or hinder in achieving this goal. Speaking of the goal of the sermon, Miller says that it is this subtle quality of "reality" that is necessary to evoke human response.⁶

Other authorities also witness to the need and importance of reality in the sermon. Smith confidently asserts: "Reality alone stirs the hearts of men."⁷ Bowie also spoke of the need for reality in the sermon. To the degree that the preacher succeeds he gives the people "the rare and glorious moments of winged inspiration."⁸ For Kirkpatrick reality is not only an important factor in inspirational preaching, but he makes it the goal of preaching. At times he seems to consider it synonymous with inspiration. It is his opinion that the cause of the feeling of inspiration in the hearer is preaching that produces in the hearer the feeling that he is brought face to face with reality.⁹

⁶Ibid., p. 142.

⁷Authur H. Smith, Preachers and Preaching (Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, 1925), p. 115.

⁸Walter Russell Bowie, Preaching (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), p. 216.

⁹Robert White Kirkpatrick, The Creative Delivery of Sermons (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944), p. 215.

In addition to the need for reality in the sermon, Sleeth and Kirkpatrick go into more detail in describing what they mean by reality. Sleeth says that it is the task of the preacher to make things come alive for the hearers. The audience must get actual pictures in their minds; there must be participation and identification on the part of the hearers. "If the preacher has caught the drama of the story his people actually live for a few minutes with the ancient prophet--and God."¹⁰

Kirkpatrick contributes additional clarity as to the meaning of reality. He points out that reality is not the same as the words or ideas in the sermon. It is necessary to distinguish between language and reality, symbols and fact. Words are not the reality in themselves but they are mere symbols. Reality lies much deeper and is more fundamental. Reality is the very essence of the truth. Words are merely "black marks on a page or vibrations of air of a particular combination of wave-lengths." The words are only secondary; it is in the last analysis the reality behind the words that is primary.¹¹

Bowie, in addition to describing reality, which he calls "the pearl of great price,"¹² also gives some helpful examples to illustrate this subject. In the examples he points out how

¹⁰Ronald K. Sleeth, Persuasive Preaching (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1956), p. 71.

¹¹Kirkpatrick, op. cit., pp. 18-21.

¹²Bowie, op. cit., p. 199.

the authors use words that have color, feeling, and movement. Consider the example of a portion of Peter Marshall's sermon. Note how he causes the listener not only to hear but also in a sense to live within the truth of these words:

There is no disgrace in being homesick. At times, I have felt the tugging of those invisible fingers and heard the whispering of those voices. . . . I have longed for the northland. . . . To see again the low stone houses, the swelling hills, the white tails of the waterfalls.

I wanted to hear again the gentle low voices of the women and the music of the gaelic tongue. . . . to smell the delicate fragrance of bluebells in the spring and the rhododendron; to hear the mavis sing . . . and the lark.

I have wanted to see the long twilights, to look out over the waters of the Firth, and be grateful to God that there was still more of Scotland beyond.¹³

In another sermon Peter Marshall conveys not only the fact that there was a storm or even a mere description of it, but rather he makes his listeners actually feel as though they were experiencing a storm.

It was strangely dark. A thunderstorm was blowing up from the mountains and the clouds hid the sun. . . . People looked up at the sky and became frightened. . . . They stood blinking at flashes of lightning like daggers of fire.

Mountain piled upon mountain like frozen thunder.¹⁴

Bowie points out that to achieve reality, the words used should not only narrate or merely describe, but the words

¹³Ibid., p. 200.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 200-1.

ought also help the hearer to see, feel, taste, in his own mind and senses the truth being presented. Little of the actual reality is conveyed in the statement, "It was a beautiful view." To capture the reality the speaker through the medium of words must convey the exact nature of the beauty and the view. When the view has actually become beautiful in the mind of the hearer, then reality has been conveyed.¹⁵

Imagination

The secret of achieving reality is in what Peter Marshall once heard his teacher say: "Gentlemen, in writing sermons, I beg of you, use a sanctified imagination."¹⁶

Since it is reality in the sermon that is the major factor contributing to the inspirational quality in preaching, it becomes important to note that the main ingredient in the achievement of reality is imagination. Thus, imagination is of the utmost importance in inspirational preaching.

Most of the authorities recognized the importance and value of imagination. Baxter said in regard to the preacher: "In his quest for reality he must make use of imagination, which, as the word itself suggests is the formation of mental images."¹⁷

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 199-200.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 195.

¹⁷Batsell Barrett Baxter, The Heart of the Yale Lectures (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1954), pp. 90-1.

Broadus observes that every true orator has imagination. Without this gift it may be possible for the speaker to instruct and even convince, but he will never be able to penetrate to the hearts of men.¹⁸

Jowett expressed it negatively when he said that the lack of imagination "gives unreality to our preaching."¹⁹

Kirkpatrick, in his book, discusses the importance and function of imagination at great length:

Imagination has the capacity to bring us into an experience of reality as completely and definitely as actual flesh and blood contact with it.

The minister, then, must imaginatively create the reality of the sermon at the moment of delivery.²⁰

Lecturing to the divinity students at Yale, James Edward Freeman gave classic expression to the importance of imagination in inspirational preaching:

Imagination, yes, imagination, God's great gift to us, His chosen servants, recognized, developed, used, it gives us a power, an influence of unmeasured potentiality; ignored, uncultivated, unemplyed, it renders us ineffective, cold, dreary and unprofitable. Cultivate it, pray for it, struggle for it, it is the golden master-key to open many doors, the open-sesame to many human hearts.²¹

¹⁸John A. Broadus, A Treatise On The Preparation and Delivery of Sermons (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, c.1895), p. 396.

¹⁹Baxter, op. cit., p. 78.

²⁰Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 81.

²¹Baxter, op. cit., p. 80.

An example of a preacher who becomes outstanding for his use of imagination is Robert G. Lee. In his famous sermon, "Pay Day--Some Day," nearly every line bristles with imaginative suggestiveness. Through the use of his imagination he succeeds to a remarkable degree in conveying the reality intended. As Lee through his imagination paints a picture of King Ahab, one can feel something of his mean, petty, childish and ugly nature:

he, a king with a great army and a fat treasury, was acting like a blubbering baby. Cannon ability was expressing itself in popgun achievement. A massive giant sprawling on the bed like a dwarf punily peevish! A big whale wallowing and spouting angrily about because he is denied minnow food! A bear growling sulkily because he cannot lick a spoon in which is a bit of honey! An eagle shrieking and beating his wings in the dust of his own pleasure like a quarreling sparrow fussily fighting with other sparrows for the crumbs in the dust of the village street! A lion sulkily roaring because he was not granted the cheese in a mouse trap! A battleship cruising for a sham battle!²²

In another section of the same sermon, Lee, through the dimension of the imagination, makes the listener actually feel the horror of the atrocity when innocent Naboth was stoned:

Then strong hands jerked Naboth out of the seat of the accused. Doubtless muttering curses the while, they dragged him out from among the throngs of people, while children screamed and cried, while women shrieked in terror, while men moved in confusion and murmured in consternation. They dragged him roughly to a place outside the walls of the

²²E. Schuyler English, Robert G. Lee (Grand Rapids 2, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1949), pp. 334-5.

city and with stones they beat his body to the ground. Naboth fell to the ground as lily by hailstones beaten to earth, as stately cedar uprooted by furious storms. His head by stones is crushed, as eggs crushed by heel of giant. His legs are splintered! His arms are broken! His ribs are crushed. Bones stick out from the mass of human flesh as fingers of ivory from pots of red paint. Brains, emptied from his skull, are scattered about. Blood spatters like crimson rain. Naboth's eyes roll in sockets of blood. His tongue between broken jaws becomes still. His mauled body becomes-- at last--still. His last gasp is a sigh. Naboth is dead. . . .²³

In addition to the importance, description, and example of imagination, M. Reu and W. R. Bowie respectively, contribute two helpful insights on this subject. Not only is imagination a necessary tool of the preacher as he seeks to convey reality, but imagination is also needed by the hearers in order to receive and interpret reality. When some individuals are not inspired during the service, perhaps the major cause is their lack of imagination. The imagination of the hearer must be triggered into action. "In proportion as the preacher sets the imagination at work in his preaching, the emotions of his hearers will be charmed."²⁴

Bowie makes another significant observation. Imagination abounds and is nurtured by preachers who are sensitive and sympathetic. The sensitive and sympathetic eye is more apt to

²³Ibid., pp. 346-7.

²⁴M. Reu, Homiletics, translated from the German by Albert Steinhäuser (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, c.1924), p. 183.

find in the countless common things of life suggestions as to how to present the invisible truths of God.²⁵

The emphatic statement of H. W. Beecher on the primacy of imagination in successful preaching serves as a fitting summary of this topic:

And the first element on which your preaching will largely depend for power and success, you will perhaps be surprised to learn, is Imagination, which I regard as the most important of all the elements that go to make the preacher. But you must not understand me to mean the imagination as the creation of fiction, and still less as the factor of embellishment. The imagination in its relations to art and beauty is one thing; and in its relations to moral truth it is another thing, of the most substantial character. Imagination of this kind is the true germ of faith; it is the power of conceiving as definite the things which are invisible to the senses,--of giving them distinct shape. And this, not merely in your own thoughts, but with the power of presenting the things which experience cannot primarily teach to other people's minds, so that they shall be just as obvious as though seen with the bodily eye.²⁶

Concreteness

The inner relationship of reality and imagination as it affects the inspirational quality in preaching is complex. Not only are reality and imagination complex, intangible factors, but the situation becomes increasingly difficult when an attempt is made to determine all the various ingredients within the sermon that contribute to imagination and

²⁵Bowie, op. cit., p. 199.

²⁶Baxter, op. cit., p. 76.

thus to reality. A thorough classification of the devices in style which affect imagination is nearly an impossible task. However, most of the authorities do agree that "concreteness" is by far the most important factor in stirring the imagination of the hearers. In this thesis concreteness will be considered in a broad sense as the device within the sermon which directly affects imagination and thus indirectly is a cause of inspiration in the sermon.

Beecher drew attention to the importance of concreteness when he said: "that which will touch men most sensibly, and arouse them most affectually, and bring them to a new life most certainly, is that which is specific."²⁷

The need for concreteness as the stimulant for imagination was also stated by Kirkpatrick. The people must be led to "see, hear, touch, taste and smell" to the extent that invisible things come into actual flesh and blood contact with them. It is only concreteness that can repeople the dead realms of the past with moving life.²⁸

Winston E. Jones expressed himself cautiously when he said that picturesque and concrete language is usually much closer to reality.²⁹

²⁷Ibid., pp. 135-6.

²⁸Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 86.

²⁹Winston E. Jones, Preaching and the Dramatic Arts (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948), p. 63.

Farmer stressed the need for concreteness in all the phases of the sermon. The content, style, and presentation are to be geared into the life situation of the hearers:

so that those who listen will be unable not to see their own world coming through the message as a pattern is brought out in an otherwise featureless fabric by a hot iron.³⁰

Both Garrison³¹ and Baxter³² warn against abstractness. They agree that clarity is a valuable aid to concreteness.

Broadus also spoke of concreteness in terms of simplicity and clarity. "It is preposterous for preachers aiming at men's hearts, to miss the mark by shooting over their heads."³³

The chief elements that contribute to concreteness are figures of speech. According to the method of Garrison,³⁴ figures of speech may be divided into two groups; one has to do with sounds and the other with resemblances. Several of the most important figures of speech of each group will be discussed and illustrated in the following paragraphs.

The most widely used figures of speech that have to do with sounds are alliteration and onomatopoeia. Of the two,

³⁰Farmer, op. cit., p. 103.

³¹Webb B. Garrison, The Preacher And His Audience (Westwood, N. J.: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1954), p. 90.

³²Baxter, op. cit., p. 134.

³³Broadus, op. cit., p. 393.

³⁴Garrison, op. cit., pp. 109-10.

alliteration is the more common device found in inspirational preachers. It exploits the repetition of the sounds at the beginning of two or more consecutive words or of words near one another. Onomatopoeia also exploits sound; it consists of using words that imitate natural sounds. This sound suggestiveness is especially important in creating atmosphere and mood. The sounds convey a direct appeal to the sensory apparatus of the listener.³⁵

Dr. Walter A. Maier is an example of an inspirational preacher who was masterful in employing sound figures of speech. Alliteration, especially, was a common device of Maier; this not only helped to clarify his message, but was also a factor which helped inspire the hearts of his hearers. Nearly every sermon has from six to forty-five instances of this figure of speech.³⁶ It is well to illustrate some of these common examples:

gripped by gloom, dazed and desperate over the crimes of Calvary. . . .

the Destroyer of Death lives to put the foes of your faith to flight. . . .

the eternal victory over sorrow and suffering, loneliness and loss, darkness and disease, death and damnation, horror and hell. . . .

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Lester Erwin Zeitler, "An Investigation of the Factors of Persuasion in the Sermons of Dr. Walter A. Maier," unpublished Master's Thesis, Concordia Seminary, (St. Louis, 1956), p. 118.

joy instead of jealousy, beauty rather than bloodshed, grace and peace in place of grief and punishment. . . .³⁷

complete compassion, limitless love, matchless mercy, glorious grace, free forgiveness. . . .

full, free, final, finished mercies. . . .

permitting the pursuit of paltry possessions. . . .

help and heal, soothe and strengthen, comfort and cheer. . . .³⁸

In creating concreteness and thus aiding inspiration, the figures of resemblance are even more important than the figures of sound. All the figures of resemblance depend upon a direct or implied comparison. They are all a special variation of the metaphor. The metaphor is perhaps the most important of all the figures of speech. Through a leap of the mind the hearer is able to relate a new unfamiliar experience with an old perception.³⁹

Winston E. Jones, addressing himself to the figures of resemblance, says that the preacher ought use every known device for making a thing plain by comparing it with something else.⁴⁰

Broadus adds a helpful insight to this subject. The resemblance ought be made with things that are common and uni-

³⁷Ibid., p. 76.

³⁸Ibid., pp. 118-9.

³⁹Garrison, op. cit., p. 110.

⁴⁰Jones, op. cit., p. 65.

versal, things that all men of all times have experienced. He says that it is impossible to achieve this "vibration upon the chords of the soul" except by associating a thought "with such ideas as mother, child, friends, home, country and the like"; the object to be associated must be familiar and in itself commonplace.⁴¹

One of the greatest inspirational preachers of all times, C. H. Spurgeon, was a genius in associating great truths with common life happenings. Blackwood says, "he could make commonplace truths shine like stars in the country sky."⁴² This was no doubt a major factor in his ability to inspire men. Perry and Whitesell, in their book, describe his ability this way:

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was an artist in his ability to use word pictures. With a highly developed but well-controlled imagination, he used similes and metaphors freely, and took most of his illustrations from the Bible and common life.⁴³

Robert G. Lee, another famous inspirational preacher, also attributes his success largely to his ability to make his thoughts concrete; he associates ideas with familiar things. He calls it "picturizing" the message. After writing his sermon, he reads it over several times, and as he

⁴¹Broadus, op. cit., p. 221

⁴²Andrew Watterson Blackwood, The Fine Art of Preaching (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1945), p. 89.

⁴³Farris D. Whitesell and Lloyd M. Perry, Variety In Your Preaching (Westwood, N. J.: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1954), p. 127.

does, he forms pictures in his imagination of what he has written. He describes his own preaching this way:

As I preach, pictures I have created as I read over my sermons, roll in upon me. Sometimes I have had to create two thousand different pictures for one sermon. I turn my language into pictures, and preach through pictures, which roll in upon me, and by me, and around me, by the hundreds as I preach.⁴⁴

Also to be included in the group of figures of resemblance are personification and dramatization. These two devices are very important in achieving concreteness. Personification rests upon treating things and creatures as though human. Dramatization is an attempt to act out the original truth. The use of direct quotations rather than descriptions often increases the dramatic tension and aids concreteness.⁴⁵

John Chrysostom, the "golden tongued" preacher of the early church, was skillful in the use of dramatization. The use of dramatization was no doubt a major factor contributing to the inspirational quality of this great preacher. Broadus records that dramatization gave his sermons life and vigor that could scarcely be equalled any other way.⁴⁶

An example of another truly great inspirational preacher was Dwight L. Moody. Lord Shaftesbury, who heard Moody during

⁴⁴English, op. cit., pp. 320-1.

⁴⁵Garrison, op. cit., p. 112.

⁴⁶Broadus, op. cit., p. 377.

the revival in London, reports: "He had a wonderful power for getting at the hearts of men. . . ."47 Here is an example of a genuine, warm, and sensitive man who weaves nearly all the chords of concreteness that, with the garment of imagination he might enrobe reality. Following, is an example of Moody's masterful touch which can inspire the imaginative reader:

I can imagine that when Christ said to the little band around Him, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel," Peter said, "Lord, do You really mean that we are to go back to Jerusalem and preach the Gospel to those men that murdered You?" "Yes," said Christ, "go hunt up that man that spat in My face; tell him that he may have a seat in My Kingdom yet. Yes, Peter, go find that man that made that cruel crown of thorns and placed it on My brow, and tell him I will have a crown ready for him when he comes into My Kingdom, and there will be no thorns in it. Hunt up that man that took a reed and brought it down over the cruel thorns, driving them into My brow, and tell him I will put a scepter in his hand, and he shall rule over the nations of the earth, if he will accept salvation. Search for the man that drove the spear into My side, and tell him there is a nearer way to My heart than that. Tell him I forgive him freely, and that he can be saved if he will accept salvation as a gift."48

⁴⁷William R. Moody, The Life of Dwight L. Moody (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1900), p. 240.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 435-8.

CHAPTER V

THE CONCLUSION

The purpose of Christian preaching ought never be merely to arouse the thrill of inspiration in the hearers. This is a sure way not to achieve its effect. The purpose of preaching is to proclaim the crucified and ascended Christ as Lord and Saviour of heaven and earth. The feeling of inspiration can only come as a by-product of the preacher who loves people and who preaches gospel to the needs of the people.

The inspirational quality in preaching is not a static constant effect that necessarily accompanies all gospel preaching. Its essence is not easily subjected to analysis. Rather, it is an intangible relative condition that may be present with certain Christian preachers in degrees of intensity and frequency. Nearly every Christian preacher possesses this gift in varying degrees. There is no absolute possession of this quality as one might possess real estate. Nor is this quality constant in degree as is a preacher's baritone voice. A pastor may inspire the majority in his audience on one occasion and leave them cold the next.

This thesis concerns itself with the factors that would aid this quality to exist in its greatest degree of intensity and constancy with each Christian preacher. Kirkpatrick

wisely points out:

While inspired preaching cannot be commanded, the conditions that always exist when it is present can be approximated, thus opening the way for inspiration to assume and maintain control. . . .¹

The human factors of preaching which affect inspiration are felt from the joint impact of two languages. The first, and most important, is the language of the preacher's personality. His personality is viewed as the sum total of his characteristics. A primary characteristic is Christian character; the preacher must be a man who lives and walks in the Spirit. Closely akin to character is sincerity; there must be the ring of personal conviction in the preacher's message. In addition, he ought have a consuming love for people combined with an earnest desire to communicate to them.

The second language which is a major factor affecting inspiration is that of the word-symbols used in the sermon. The preacher is an artist; he "must use words to the same end that others use brushes and chisels."² The preacher cannot thrust his inspiration directly into the hearts of people. He must use words. The words ought be the appropriate symbols

¹Robert White Kirkpatrick, The Creative Delivery of Sermons (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944), p. 230.

²Winston E. Jones, Preaching and the Dramatic Arts (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948), p. 16.

to signal the true reality in the hearer's mind. Concreteness best serves this end. Through concreteness the imagination of the hearer is helped to capture the actual reality of the truth that is being presented. When the hearers through the use of sense or memory experience the actual reality of something good, beautiful or meaningful, then they are most likely to experience the effect of the inspirational quality.

One cannot command nor regulate inspiration in preaching. However, when the sum total of these factors are present in preacher and sermon, there will exist a more probable medium for creation and communication of this quality. Thus, every Christian preacher "may confidently tread the highway by which that flaming chariot often descends."³

³Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 216.

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