

### THE PREACHER'S MESSAGE AND HOW TO DELIVER IT.

By Rev. C. O. Groves.

*From Address at Conference on Evangelism.*

The preacher of the Gospel is God's ambassador to men. He is responsible to God and must give an account to Him of what he preaches and how he preaches.

Many voices are suggesting messages for the pulpit in these latter days, and many of our preachers are heeding these voices and are feeding their people on "chaff."

Nearly every week I get requests to preach on certain patriotic and philanthropic subjects. But I have not yet gotten my consent to turn aside from preaching the Gospel on the Lord's day.

We are the ambassadors of Christ. We are His messengers, and we must give diligence to present ourselves "approved unto Him, rightly dividing or handling aright—the Word of Truth.

We must never be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ—it is far more important than any patriotic message we can possibly bring to our people, for "it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

"The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

The preacher's message, then, is the message of the cross—not the Red Cross, but the Cross of Calvary. "God forbid that we should glory save in the Cross of Christ." God forbid that we should know anything in the pulpit save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Every true minister ought to feel as did the Apostle Paul: "Woe is me, if I preach not the Gospel."

The preaching of the cross, that is, the doctrine of salvation through the crucifixion of the Son of God as a sacrifice for the sins of men, is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

This is the Gospel, and the man who does not preach it is not a Gospel preacher. He may be very learned; he may be very eloquent; he may be very popular, but he is not an ambassador of Christ.

So much for the message. Now for the question, "How shall we deliver it?"

In the first place make the message clear and plain. Cut out every unnecessary word. Use the simplest language possible. If you are a profound scholar, don't let anybody find it out. Don't "air" your learning in the pulpit.

I have heard preachers do that, and I have seen the congregation go to sleep. If you want the people to hear your message, speak so they can understand you. I think one reason why the "common people" heard the Saviour gladly was that they understood him.

An Irishman was persuaded to go and hear a noted preacher. As he was returning, he said: "Faith, he's no great preacher, for I understood every word." That was a wonderful compliment.

Our message is important, and if we would be faithful messengers, we must speak so that the people can understand every word. If they lose a word, they may lose a sentence; and if they lose a sentence, they may lose the connection; and if they lose the connection, they lose inter-

est; and if they lose interest, they go to sleep!

Many a sermon goes over the heads of a large part of the congregation. If angels can weep, it seems to me that they must do so when they see a preacher standing before a congregation of dying sinners and delivering a very learned discourse, an incomprehensible sermon.

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And then, if our message is to be effective it must be interesting, and it must be delivered in an attractive way.

Preachers have been divided in three classes: First, there's the man you can listen to. It's difficult, but it's possible to follow him.

Second, there's the man you can't listen to. You may try never so hard, but it's impossible.

Third, there's the man you can't help listening to. His sentences are short and strong and to the point, and he delivers his message in such an interesting, attractive way that you can't go to sleep.

Many a sermon has been spoiled because it was poorly delivered. And this brings me to my last remark.

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Our message must be delivered with great earnestness. Paul's preaching was effective because he was terribly in earnest. His heart's desire and his prayer to God was that his hearers might be saved.

If our message would be effective it must come from the heart, and it must be saturated with prayer. I think that one reason why we often fail is because we have too much head preparation, and too little preparation of the heart.

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Finally, let us remember that "they who sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth bearing precious seed shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."—Abridged from the Presbyterian of the South.

### WHY SO LONG? HOW MUCH LONGER?

"How long is it," asked an old Mohammedan woman in Bengal, "since Jesus died for sinful people? Look at me; I am old, I have prayed, given alms, gone to the holy shrines, become as dust from fasting, and all this is useless. Where have you been all this time?"

"You have been many moons in this land," said an old Eskimo to the Bishop of Selkirk. "Did you know this good news then? Since you were a boy? And your father knew? Then why did you not come sooner?"

"How is it," asked a Peruvian, "that during all the years of my life I have never before heard that Jesus Christ spoke those precious words?"

"Why," cried a Moor in Casablanca, North Africa, to a Bible-seller, "have you not run everywhere with this Book? Why do so many of my people not know of the Jesus whom it proclaims? Why have you hoarded it to yourselves?"

From the four winds comes the call—"Why so long? How much longer?"

A person without faith in God in times of testing, is a heavy load to carry in any church.

### "STEP IN ANYWHERE."

During one of the greatest battles of the Civil War, a recruit, who had lost his company in the tumult of strife, approached General Sheridan, and timidly asked where he should "step in."

"Step in?" thundered Sheridan, in a voice that frightened the already terrified recruit almost as much as the roar of cannonading and musketry. "Step in anywhere; there's fighting all along the line."

An accident occurred recently that very forcibly brought Sheridan's words to mind. A heavy piece of machinery was being moved into a building by means of a block and tackle. Suddenly one of the ropes parted, and the machine began to slide backward. The two men who had charge of the work sprang to stay its progress, but it was more than they were capable of doing.

"Give us a lift!" one of them shouted to a by-stander.

"Where shall I take hold?" asked the man thus addressed, unmindful of the fact that both men were exerting every muscle to control the machine, and that there was not a second to lose.

"Grab hold anywhere!" yelled the mover.

But another had already seen the necessity for instant action, and rendered the necessary assistance.

It may be that now, in these days of stress, we are in a field where we are unaccustomed to work, and are timidly asking where we shall "step in." We may find our answer in the words of Sheridan: "Step in anywhere; there's fighting all along the line."—Selected.

### PAUL'S TEST FOR AN APPROVED MINISTER.

J. G. Grout.

(II. Cor. 6:4-10—But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God.)

In patience.  
In afflictions.  
In necessities.  
In distresses.  
In stripes.  
In imprisonments.  
In tumults.  
In labors.  
In watchings.  
In fastings.  
By pureness.  
By knowledge.  
By long suffering.  
By kindness.  
By the Holy Ghost.  
By love unfeigned.  
By the word of truth.  
By the power of God.  
By the armor of righteousness.  
By honor and dishonor.  
By evil report and good report.  
As deceivers and yet true.  
As unknown yet well known.  
As dying and behold we live.  
As chastened and not killed.  
As sorrowful yet always rejoicing.  
As poor yet making many rich.  
As having nothing and yet possessing all things.—Sel.