

such indifference. Whitefield, one of the most effective revivalists, not only aimed at the conversion of sinners, but expected it wherever he went. Third, preaching should have a direct application to the hearers. An editor of a western paper placed in the heading of his paper, "This paper is written for the people now on earth." It would be well if many of the sermons were directed to that class of people, that is, to those in the present audience. The people must be made to feel that they are meant. Nothing will be done without it. A distinguished minister has well said: "A sermon without an application is like a body without a soul." Fourth, preaching should embrace the whole gospel, and that in such proportions as the circumstances of the people require. Many dwell chiefly on the terrors of the law. I believe too that the indifferent hearers of today need much of this kind of preaching. Others dwell upon the love of God till it appears next to impossible that He should punish the wicked according to his Word. There are seasons when the terrors of the Lord are just what is needed, but there are other times when the same hearers need a different class of truth. The real hell, as described in the Scriptures, is not uncovered in all the terrific horrors which belong to it, nor in such a manner that the following couplet is rendered inapplicable:

Smooth down the stubborn text to ears polite,
And snugly keep damnation out of sight.

Hell is not unfolded so as to make the heart and soul of the many sinners in the congregation quake and tremble before the Lord God of Hosts.

In the consideration of the preparation we are met with the objection from the psychologists, who say that we take advantage of the people. That the audience is drawn to make a decision against its will. We deny that the audience is trapped into giving any decision. In the true revival, the pressure is brought to bear on the people by previous weeks of prayer and the messages during the meetings, so that every one has a fair chance to choose for or against a better life.

An opponent of revivals has said: "I consider the state of these new converts in no less light than that of a state of terror. They are merely frightened into a religious life. This may be true and yet it is possible they are converted; and that which was occasioned by a fright may last a life time.

Sin has been painted over and made to look so nice that men no longer fear the outcome of it. All that have ever been frightened into the Kingdom thank God they ever heard the preaching which frightened them from their sins into a religious life.

It was a prepared man, a prepared message and a prepared church that received and answered to the first Pentecost. The church can have its belated Pentecost whenever it is ready to pay the price. The message of the hour is the old message, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord."

Dr. Charles L. Goodell says, no one is prepared for the great work of winning men until he is mastered by a few great varieties of Christian life, and that he has a commission fresh from the court of heaven to declare them. If he is doubtful of the temper of the "Sword of the Spirit" which is the "Word of God," he will do no great execution with it.

We must believe that we are God's men and that we can be used by him, poor and

ignorant and wicked and weak as we were by nature, if only we will surrender ourselves to the full tides of his purpose. We must have a clear conception of the lost condition of men out of Christ and the passion which consumed our Lord must fairly master us.

In the preparation for a revival we must have a prepared message. Preaching is not an end, it is a means to an end. The value of a sermon is not in its form, but in its effect. The prerequisite for all successful preaching is conviction. A man may not have many articles in his creed, but he needs to have a few concerning which he has no doubt whatsoever. An audience can feel the tone of uncertainty in the preacher's voice, even though they may not be able to explain wherein the weak point lies. The "Word" tells us, "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound who shall prepare himself to the battle?"

Our next concern is the form of the message. In evangelistic preaching the simplicity of the form has much to do with the force of the sermon. The thought should be direct and forceful and the words such as benefit the thought. The value of his message is not in the human element, but in the divine. An evangelistic sermon ought to and must be interesting. There ought to be something about it that will stir the interest of the listeners, or otherwise it will have little effect. The preacher should gain the attention of his hearers the instant he is on his feet. His first words should be planned especially if he is a new preacher in a place. The audience judges whether it will like the preacher by his first approach. If he has nothing in his first sentence for them, the chances are that the majority will not look further. If the preacher plans to read scripture he should have a purpose and not just fill in time. Not long since, I attended a service in which the pastor was obliged to pause in his scripture reading to ask some to discontinue their whispering. I asked myself, who was to be blamed, the preacher or those whispering. The passage of scripture was of such a nature that with a little care in reading it would hold the attention of the most flighty of minds. If we are going to read scripture we should put life into the reading, for it is the "Living Word."

Ours is a direct and eager age. It asks for much in little. It is the age of small books, of short addresses, of thirty-minute sermons. Many evangelistic sermons are too long. You may effectually preach an hour message at morning worship, when the majority are professed Christians, but the evening message should be steady movement and to the point. It is a wise preacher who knows when to stop. One professor is wont to say, "The way a stake is driven is by hitting it a number of times in the same place." The average audience carries away a very few points of any message. It will be more effective if there are a few points well clinched than for a message to cover everything from Genesis to Revelations and nothing in particular.

One has said, "We must not only strike the iron when it is hot, but strike it until it is made hot."

Of even greater importance than the form is the substance of the message. What shall I preach? "The preaching that I bid thee." You must have an evangelistic heart if you are to preach the evangel and preach it with a soul on fire. If you are not moved no one else will be. The revival sermon must lead up to an immediate decision. Insist upon victory on the spot.

Again there must be a prepared Church to receive and be the channel for the revival. The first thing to be done by way of preparing the church for its work is to stir up the average church member to a realizing sense of his critical position, and a good text would be, "He that hath ears to hear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches."

The next step in the preparation of the churches is the realizing sense that it has a mission in the world. The field of operation is not finally the church; it is the world. "Ye are the salt of the world." It is the saltiness of the salt that counts; and it is Christ in the Christian that avails.

The final preparation is to be found in personal contact with the Master. A casual observer bore witness to the fact that the disciples had been with Jesus. The world is saying that the church does not believe its own message, and on the face of it there seems to be little doubt that the world is right.

Every great movement has results, and usually the benefits of such a movement is judged by these results. The same can be said of revivals. The first step is an increase of zeal and devotion on the part of God's people. They wake up to a sense of neglected obligations, and resolve to return to the faithful discharge of duty. They confess their delinquencies with deep humility. They importunately ask for the descent of the Holy Ghost on those around them; on the church with which they are connected; on their friends who are out of the ark of safety. Their conversation becomes more spiritual and edifying. They find it no difficult matter to be faithful in pressing the obligation of religion upon those who are indifferent to it, and in warning them of their danger. Another step is the alarm and conviction of those who have hitherto been careless. Sometimes the change in this respect is very gradual; and for a considerable time nothing more can be said than that there is a more listening ear; and this increased attention is gradually matured into deep solemnity and pungent conviction. Those who once would have disdained anything which would indicate the least concern for their salvation, hesitate not to ask and to receive instruction even from the obscurest Christian. I am sorry to have to note another group, who are partially awakened; whose attention is in some measure excited, but not enough to prompt to any decided and vigorous effort. They attend regularly not only upon the ordinary, but upon some of the extraordinary means of grace and treat the whole subject not only with great respect, but with decided seriousness; but after all do not advance to the decisive point of repentance, or even of true conviction of sin. I am afraid that the church too soon forgets this group when the special services are closed. A little more burden might give the deciding tilt and they would be won for Christ.

Those that object to revivals say that the evils are greater than the good accomplished. Soon every one is back in the rut and living the same indifferent life. True there are backsliders from every great cause, but from every revival there are a number that get established and become a positive factor in the cause of righteousness. I am positive that there are greater benefits derived from the revival than evils; therefore let the Church continue to pray for a Heaven sent revival.

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