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THEOLOGICAL S

A HISTORY

OF THE

*Development of the Presbyterian  
Church in North Carolina,*

AND OF

*Synodical Home Missions,*

TOGETHER WITH

EVANGELISTIC ADDRESSES BY JAMES I. VANCE, D. D.,  
AND OTHERS

BY

Rev. D. I. CRAIG.



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# THE EVANGELISTIC PASTOR.

BY REV. J. WILBUR CHAPMAN, D. D.

JUST what is an evangelistic pastor? Perhaps we shall better reach an understanding concerning his position if we answer the question negatively.

First: He is not of necessity one who preaches constantly along what is known as evangelistic lines. There are very many people to-day who seem to think that the pastor is not doing evangelistic work unless he is regularly giving an invitation in so many words and all the time calling men to repent. This is not necessarily true, as we shall show later, for frequently the best invitation is not spoken by the lips—but by the very presence of the man of God.

Second: He is not always one who is conspicuous because of great additions to his membership. There are men to-day whose additions have been exceedingly small who are as thoroughly evangelistic as those whose success has been far more remarkable. With the minister as with the church, it is the spirit that counts. If he has a real concern for the lost, if he lives a life of fellowship with Christ, he could choose any theme for his people and it would be apparent to all his hearers that he was longing for the lost to know Christ.

He need not of necessity close every sermon with an appeal, although that is frequently the best thing to do, for in so doing we impress our hearers with our confidence in our message and our expectation of results.

The minister of the seminary church where I was a

student one evening preached a sermon and then returned to his home utterly discouraged because he felt that he was a failure in the ministry, and he practically determined that he would never preach again, yet at the same time he was conscious that he had been greatly burdened for the lost. Some time past midnight his door-bell rang, and the leader of his choir, who had been counted a skeptic, came to him to say, "Doctor, I am in an agony concerning my soul. Your sermon to-night has convicted me of my sin and I must have help or I shall die." In a very short time he was rejoicing in Christ. Then said the minister to him, "What was it in my sermon that moved you, I should like to have you tell me." The man replied: "It was not so much, sir, what you said but the way you said it. I could see by the look in your eye and by the very pathos in your voice that you were longing for men to be saved and I could not resist your message." But there is a positive answer to the question to-day. Let us consider that side of it.

First: That man is evangelistic who is truly a man of prayer and Bible study, and yet at the same time one of intense earnest action. The greatest fanatics I know are those who study the Bible and pray almost without ceasing and then stop with these devotions. They do not fit into practice in their daily lives the message God gave them in his Word and the vision he vouchsafed unto them in their prayers, so on the one side there must be prayer and Bible study; we cannot have too much of it, while on the other side there is the translation into life of those things which God has given us. It was thus that Finney prayed, read God's Word and worked, and it was thus that Mr. Moody lived and preached.

Second: That man is evangelistic in his preaching who realizes that men are lost without Christ, and that

the Gospel is the only way of salvation. He believes that it is not so much a question either of character or conduct primarily as of the new birth. He realizes that "the wages of sin is death, and the soul that sinneth it shall die." With such a conviction as this, if he is true to his ordination vows and also true to the Word of God, he can preach in no halting, hesitating way.

An old Scotch woman went to hear Robert Murray McCheyenne preach for the first time. Some one asked her what she thought of him. She hesitated for a moment and then said, what I am sure any true minister had rather have said about him than that he was the most brilliant preacher among men. She said: "The man preaches as if he was a-dyin' to have you converted." Oh, for such a spirit as this in the ministry to-day. Thank God for the men who have great intellectual power, for those who bear well their scholastic honors to which they are certainly entitled, but is it not true that what we need to-day more than anything else is a gracious outpouring of the Holy Ghost, an energizing of that power which comes only from on high, that we may preach for souls?

The pastor is pre-eminently the soul winner in his own parish. No one can take his place. If he is not faithful to those over whom God has made him the overseer, he shall be called to account at the judgment seat of Christ. Whatever we may believe concerning the office of the evangelist, and we must believe thoroughly in this, however necessary it may be that we should give him his rightful place in the church,\*and many agree that this is almost an absolute necessity, yet no evangelist can supplant the pastor in the matter of soul-winning. But if the pastor is to be successful, there are certain points which must be emphasized concerning his life, and this to a

greater degree even than in the experience of the ordinary pastor of a church who may hold a congregation together because of eloquent or intellectual achievements, because of winning social qualities or by a striking personality. No pastor can ever be a soul winner without attention is given to,

First: *His private life.* One might preach an ordinary sermon and by force of intellect or power of magnetism interest an assembly. I have in mind a man who for years led an impure life, yet, while he interested his congregation with his masterful gifts, he never won a soul to the Master, and if any one should say in answer to this, "But are there not evangelists whose lives are unclean and yet who have a measure of success?" my answer would be, "The evangelist may be reaping a harvest the seed of which has been sown by some godly pastor," and so the illustration still holds. But to be a soul winner is entirely different. The private life must be taken into account. There are trees, the spread of whose roots under ground equals the spread of their branches above ground, and this leads me to say that no man can be a soul winner in the ministry without he is right in his home, right in his study, right in his devotion, right in his heart, or in other words, lives in private what he preaches in public. Our people forget our texts, they frequently forget our particular forms of expression, but the spirit of the message we have delivered is about them not infrequently for a lifetime.

A prominent American preacher told me that he once preached in Robert Murray McCheyenne's pulpit, and he asked if any one there had heard McCheyenne preach. One old man was brought to the front. "Can you tell me," said the minister, "some of the texts of McCheyenne?" and the old man made reply, "I don't remember

them." "Then can you tell me some sentences he used?" and again the reply was, "I have entirely forgotten them." With a feeling of disappointment, the great preacher said, "Well, don't you remember anything about him at all?" "Ah," said the man, "that is a different question. I do remember something about him. When I was a lad by the roadside playing, one day Robert Murray McChyenne came along, and laying his hand upon my head, he said, 'Jamie, lad, I am away to see your poor sick sister,' and then looking into my eyes, he said, 'And Jamie, I am very concerned about your own soul.' I have forgotten his texts and his sermons, sir, but I can feel the tremble of his hand and I can still see the tear in his eye."

Let us remember it is not so much what we say as the way we say it that constitutes the minister the soul winner.

Second: The very greatest attention must be paid to the prayer life if the pastor is to be a winner of souls, and I doubt not but that the most of us fail just here, largely because of the fact that we are so busy, for very few people understand the responsibility and obligations resting upon a pastor; from morning until night and often night till morning he is at the call of his people and of the citizens of the city or town where he may live, and it is such an easy thing to pray in a perfunctory sort of way or not to pray at all. A very few may be unmindful of prayer because of selfishness, a few others because of indifference, but perhaps many of us because we do not appreciate what the power of prayer is.

In the revival of 1857, when Canon Ryle sent out his celebrated appeal to the Church of England, he made this statement, that he had looked the Bible through and found that wherever there was a man of prayer there was

a man of power; that he had studied the history of the Church and had learned that wherever there was a man or woman of power, there was one who knew how to pray. He said some were Armenians, some Calvinists, some rich, some poor, some were wise and some ignorant, some loved the liturgy and some cared little for it, but all knew how to pray.

Jesus was an illustration of this. In Mark we read, "A great while before day he went away to pray." He was the Son of God, yet he would not begin a day without prayer. It is to be noticed, however, that the day begun thus with prayer ended with the healing of the leper. If the Son of God could not start the day without communing with God, how dangerous it is for any of us to try it.

In Matthew we learn that after he had fed the multitudes, he went away in a quiet place to pray. He had just worked the miracle, and yet he prays. I have a friend in heaven who used to say that it is more difficult to use a victory than to gain one, by which she meant that the most dangerous day for us was the day following a mountain-top experience, for we are so liable to try to live upon the past rather than upon the present promises of God. Jesus prayed before the miracle and after the miracle, by day and by night. What a rebuke he is to some of us.

In Luke we read that as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was changed. To my mind this is one of the best illustrations. It will be a glad day in the church when those of us who know Christ show by our faces that we have been in fellowship with him. There is something about the look of the eye, the ring of the voice and the atmosphere of a man who knows how to pray that carries conviction always.



In John we read that he stooped down at the grave of Lazarus *after he had prayed*, and said, "Lazarus, come forth."

I had a letter one day from some one who wanted me to write on a postal card the rules for soul winning. This seemed a strange request, when I remembered that I had a book in my library larger than my Bible on "How to Win Souls," and yet you can write the rules upon a postal card. Indeed, there is but one rule, "Lord, teach us to pray." The man who knows how to pray in the right way is a soul winner always. Whatever may be one's intellectual ability therefore, without prayer he is weak in this direction. This is true whether he is in the pulpit or in the pew, whether he is a Sunday-school teacher, or the superintendent, or just a member of the Church.

Third: If the pastor is to be a soul winner, close attention must be paid to his public life. It must in every sense accord with his message. He cannot preach about prayer and himself be prayerless, nor can he talk of power and be powerless, nor can he speak of consecration and live a selfish life, nor can he talk of the concern of Jesus and himself be unconcerned. Unless the private life and the public preaching strike in unison, the preacher is not a soul winner, nor is the Sunday-school teacher, nor the superintendent, nor is any Christian.

Fourth: No minister can be a soul winner without he gives close attention to his pulpit life. This suggests the theme of the sermon which must always and ever be the gospel. It has not lost its power, whatever men may say to the contrary, and as a matter of fact, it is true that wherever men are really drawing crowds of people and holding them, their theme is the glorious gospel of the Son of God. Sensationalism may draw for a time,

but the gospel steadily wins and always holds. We boast a great deal in these days of our great men and noble women in America, philanthropists, statesmen, missionaries, our honored fathers and mothers, but in so far as they are Christians and the most of them are, they have drawn their inspiration for holy living from the story of Jesus the Son of God; cradled in the manger, living at Nazareth, preaching in Galilee, suffering in Gethsemane, scourged in Jerusalem, dying upon the cross, buried in the tomb, rising with power, ascending up into heaven, seated in glory and coming again with majesty and power. Could there be a grander message than this, and that minister who delivers it fearlessly and yet tenderly in the very spirit of Jesus himself, will be a soul winner. It has always been true, but in addition to this the message must be,

First: *Practical*. I know that I speak for a great army of busy men and women in this world, when I say that these people have little time to listen to philosophical discussions and mere intellectual discourses. Life is too short for this, and as a result of the experiences of the weak, they are too weary to give the time to listening to what will not help them in their living, and the majority of them come to the church to hear the truth that will make them better and truer in every way; and more of the people of the world would join them in their worship if they were sure that they would hear from the pulpit the gospel which has ever transformed lives and strengthened character.

Second: *It must be personal*. A distinguished New York pastor tells of preaching a sermon one day in which he said to his people: "every one in this church is either a channel or a barrier for spiritual power in his relation towards God." One prominent man returned to his

home, entered his library and determined to find out which he was, and learned that he was a barrier.

Before he left the room he determined that from that time on he would be a channel. The next day he began to speak to his employees. The first was a Catholic, and he urged him to be a true Catholic. Among them came his private secretary, and he asked him if he had kept his promises to him and if he had been a good employer. Thinking that perhaps he was about to be discharged, the private secretary asked him what fault he had to find with him, when he said, "It is not that, but I am a Christian, and I am bound for heaven, and I should not like to go without asking you to go with me." Out from that one store thirteen men have been won for Christ by the testimony of this consecrated business man. The time has come when ministers have had given to them an opportunity to speak plainly and personally to their people and if they speak in the spirit of Christ the message will be received gladly, and many lives will be completely changed.

#### THE EVANGELISTIC SERMON.

In a conference of ministers gathered not long ago to discuss the general subject of evangelistic work the sermon was naturally discussed.

One minister said, "An evangelistic sermon is one that reaches out after a soul"; another said, "It is a sermon which has enough of the Gospel in it so that if one should hear the preacher but once he would know what he must do to be saved." Still another said, "It is a sermon which provokes a crisis in the hearer's life," which is rather the best definition, because it is at once apparent that men may be evangelistic and preach not only for the winning of souls, but for the upbuilding of character. An evange-

listic sermon is one which has a definite aim, and that aim is the winning of the lost to Christ, and then the building up in Christ of those who are won. It is a sermon which may be practically applied in our every-day living, and is by all means a sermon which impresses one with his need for Christ and the absolute sincerity in the desire of the preacher that he may be saved.

There may be at least four distinct marks of an evangelistic sermon:

First. It is dictated by the Holy Ghost. Since he knows the hearts of men, inspired men to write the Word of God, and at the same time is fully acquainted with us as his instruments, it naturally follows that he can suggest the theme and its manner of treatment which would be most effective in reaching the lost if we did but give him the chance to do so.

The late George H. C. MacGregor told me that he came one night to his London pulpit with his sermon carefully prepared, for he was a thorough student, and suddenly became impressed with the fact that for some reason he ought to turn aside from his well-thought-out sermon and give an entirely different message, for which he was in his judgment not so well equipped. But he followed his leading, preaching his sermon not with great satisfaction to himself, and possibly with not such great delight to his people, but the next morning he found a letter on his table in which the writer said: "I was on my way to end my life last night and dropped into your church just to pass away the time. I do not remember your singing, nor the words you spoke, but the text you chose was my mother's favorite. It was her last message to me when I left home as a boy, and I could not get away from it last night. Instead of being a suicide to-day I have become a Christian." "From that day till this," said this sainted

preacher, "I have tried to deliver no message that was not clearly dictated both in the choice of the text and the development of the theme by the Holy Spirit of God."

Second. The evangelistic sermon is one which is wrought out in prayer and preached in the power of prayer. There is a tendency on the part of the preacher when he is intellectually well versed in his message to depend upon his preparation, his power as an orator and his natural ability to move men, but in the evangelistic sermon, which is to lead men to Christ, not alone must these things move him, but also that strength which comes by prayer. It is only when the sermon has been wrought out on our knees and is preached in the consciousness, that the one of whom we speak is just at our side, that there is power in it to persuade the lost.

Third. An evangelistic sermon is one which is preached first of all to oneself. It is a good thing when the message is completed, not only to go over it on our knees, but to go over it for ourselves. The point that fails to move us we might as well cut out, for there is this sure test of the power of the sermon, it will as a rule move our hearers in the same proportion that it has moved ourselves. If it has helped us it will help others. Mr. Spurgeon used to say true preaching is artesian, it wells up from great depths. This is especially true of evangelistic preaching.

Fourth. An evangelistic sermon is one which is preached with the expectation of results. "I preached the Gospel," said a minister to me the other day in a western city. "I know it was the Gospel, and at the close of the sermon two women came to ask what they could do to be saved. I confess to my shame that I was surprised."

Evangelistic preachers have always found it true that in proportion as they have expected results and preached

in the power of their expectation God has seemed to honor their effort and to inspire others with the same enthusiasm.

Fifth. An evangelistic sermon is one which is well illustrated. There are many in the pulpit to-day who are afraid of illustrations. They ridicule the simple story-telling preacher, and in some instances they have a right to do so, but let us not forget that Jesus constantly told stories of the flowers at his feet, of the birds that flew above his head, of the woman that baked bread, of the farmer that sowed the seed, of the old father that waited for his boy. He never preached a sermon without an illustration, indeed without many of them, but the illustration must illustrate.

One of our prominent ministers in this country in telling of the visit of the celebrated Dr. Lorenz to this country told of the little boy who was operated upon for the straightening of his foot. He said after he was out from under the power of the anæsthetic, "It will be a long time before my mother hears the last of this, doctor," and then he told the story also of a boy of his own acquaintance from a poor German family, whose foot was crooked and who was operated upon by a celebrated doctor. The operation was a success and then the minister under whose influence the work had been done went to the hospital to take the boy home. The plaster cast is taken away from the foot, and it is as perfect as the other. When his attention was called to the nurses in the hospital, to the equipment of the institution, to the fine windows in the building, to every suggestion the boy would reply, "But these things are nothing compared with the doctor. He is the greatest man I have ever known." And when they reached the Missouri town and they stepped off the train the old German mother was waiting to receive her child. She did not look at his hands, neither at his face,

but she fell on her knees and looked at his foot and then cried out with tears, "It is just like any other foot." As she took the boy in her arms sobbing over and over he kept saying to her, "Mother, you must know the doctor, you must know the doctor." Then the preacher turned upon his audience to say, "And yet there is no one of us but what Jesus Christ has done ten thousand times more than the doctor did for that boy and we have never spoken for him."

This illustration is a sermon in itself. It was something in the every-day life of the preacher. There are hundreds of instances like it occurring in the year. Ability to see these things and to apply them in our teaching and preaching would increase our effectiveness almost a hundredfold.

#### THE EVANGELISTIC CHURCH.

There is a general inquiry to-day in all parts of the church both on the part of ministers and laymen concerning the evangelistic church. It is possibly true also that there is in many quarters of the church a misconception as to what the spirit and the work of such a church should be. The commission given by the great head of the church is clearly set forth in the New Testament Scriptures—Matthew xxviii. 16-20; Mark xvi. 15-20; Luke xxiv. 46-49; Acts ii. 1-4.

From all of which we learn: .

First. That God expects us to evangelize the unsaved and the unchurched masses. If a church is not evangelistic, it will soon cease to be evangelical.

Second. That God equips us to evangelize. He has left undone no part of his work. It is no question as to our own ability or fitness, but altogether a question as to his

filling us with that power which enables us to do his will, and this he has pledged himself in his word to do.

Third. If he expects and equips, then he will one day require at our hands an accounting for the field we might have occupied and the power we might have possessed.

### I.—THE CHURCH.

What is the church? Whatever other definition may be given this at least is correct so far as our conception of the evangelistic church is concerned:

It is the body of believers united by faith to Christ, who is the living head. This at once suggests a line of truth regarding the conduct of the body.

There used to be a man in Washington who as he walked the streets always attracted the attention of passers-by to himself.

First. Because of his remarkable head, which they said was more like the head of Daniel Webster than any other since his day. And, secondly, because of his deformed body. The first was a look of admiration, the second one of pity, and is this not a truth for us? Our head is perfect; when he was here among men they said, "Never man spake like this man." Now that he is exalted at the right hand of God he is the chiefest among ten thousand and the one altogether lovely. But concerning the body, in some places at least we are privileged to say that it poorly represents him and illy illustrates his spirit. If he is the head and the church is the body then it naturally follows that we are expected to do his will, and at once the question is asked, "But may we know his will?" "Certainly we may know it, by studying carefully his instructions to his disciples." In the early days he said, as he sent them forth, "I will make you fishers of men," and as he sent out the seventy it was to preach and to teach. In



his parables and his sermons the same spirit is plainly manifest, and since he is the unchanging Christ, his will of other days is his will for to-day. In the Epistle to the Hebrews we read: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day and forever," but in the Revision there is a change made in the translation and we read: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, yea and forever." There is the addition of the word "yea." Some one has suggested that the author of the Epistle is writing concerning the Jesus of yesterday and to-day being the same, when suddenly, as it were, the very angels in the skies break forth, "Yea and forever." He is the same in heaven in his purpose and desires as when he walked among men and commissioned them to go out and seek the lost until they were found.

There are some things which the evangelistic church is not.

First. It is not of necessity a church which holds extra services, although these are as a rule advisable, for it is by the extraordinary service that the attention of some is called to Christ who would not otherwise think of him in their busy lives, yet one of the strongest churches in America never passes a communion without a large accession. Recently one hundred and sixty-six came to Christ at one communion service, and it is the exception rather than the rule that extra services are held. The sainted Andrew Bonar, it is said, rarely held an extra service, and never passed a communion without the coming of many into the fold.

Second. It is not of necessity a church of constant accessions. If the seed is faithfully sown and there is an earnest evangelistic purpose the Lord of the harvest will care for the result. For a time they may be meagre, but

God's statement is true, "His word shall not return unto him void."

Third. It is not of necessity a church having important accessions, for as men count the work frequently it is a failure, so few come to him; as God views it it is the most pronounced success. When the old Scotch minister said, no one had joined his church for a long period of time except Bobbie Moffatt, he little knew, as Joseph Parker once said, that when he added Robert Moffatt to the church he practically added a continent to the Kingdom of God. It is the spirit of the church that counts, and if underlying every public service, whether it be the preaching on Sunday, or the midweek prayer service, the gathering of the elders or the meeting of the Sunday-school teachers, there is plainly manifest a real concern for the lost. With such conditions prevailing we have an evangelistic church.

## II.—THE EVANGELISTIC.

First. The evangelistic church is one, the spirit of which breathes a welcome to every one who crosses its threshold, and whether it be the minister's sermon, the music of the choir, the grace with which the ushering is accomplished, the welcome given to the stranger, the spirit is all the spirit of Christ, in which lost men are made to feel their need of him and are impressed with the thought that there is hope for every one away from him.

Second. The evangelistic church is one willing to use any method, whatever that method may be, so long as it may have the approval of the Great Head of the Church and may detract nothing from his honor and glory and not in any way grieve the Holy Spirit of God. Since the shepherd sought his sheep until he found it, and the

woman her piece of money until she recovered it, and the father waited for his boy until he was home once more, so let us change our methods if need be until we impress the lost with the fact that we long for them to know him who died that they might live. He said he would make us fishers of men.

Third. The evangelistic church is a church of prayer. It is said that when Mr. Moody and Mr. Sankey went as strangers across the sea their first meeting in the morning was a discouragement, and in the evening it was a gracious manifestation of God's power, and some time afterwards it was found that one of the members of that church had read a little notice in a paper concerning the work of the unknown evangelists, Moody and Sankey, in America, and had prayed God to send them to her land and to her church. This little slip of paper she had kept under her pillow and when she knew that the evangelists had come, she burst into tears and cried: "Now, Lord, lettest thou thine servant depart, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." There never has been a revival in history that has not been born in prayer. There never has been an evangelistic church since the church was dedicated that was not nurtured by prayer. The time has come to call the followers of Christ to their knees. It would seem almost as if God's set time to favor Zion is now here.

Fourth. The evangelistic church is one in which pastor and church are practically of one mind. Since Jesus himself could do no mighty works because of their unbelief, how can a pastor to-day accomplish very much if he is opposed by his church or hindered by indifference. They must both together have one mind, and that the mind of him who ever sought the lost, then there is a mighty force brought to play upon the conscience and life of the unsaved which cannot possibly be gainsaid.

## III.—A FINAL WORD.

First. The evangelistic church is an organized church. I am well aware that we may press the question of organization too far, but at the same time I remember that our God is a God of order, and that a perfect piece of machinery may be so yielded to him as that we would lose all thought of the machinery and stand amazed at the exhibition of power.

(a) The church officers must be enlisted in this special service for Christ. Would it not be possible for the pastor to meet his officers before he preached, and that they then pray for the blessing of God upon his sermon? Would it not be feasible for pastor and church officers to have at least one meeting a month when only prayer should be offered for God's guidance of the church? In some churches this plan has been adopted, and nowhere has it been known to fail.

(b) The men of the church must be enlisted. Whatever may be said to the contrary this is the testimony of workers who have been successful in reaching men for Christ, the work must be done through men. I am not unmindful of the power of a mother's prayer, of a wife's example, but never until the men are enlisted, banded together, thoroughly consecrated and filled with the Holy Ghost may we expect the ingathering from their ranks.

(c) The sympathies of the young people should be enlisted. Is it not a practical thing to suggest that for at least three months of time the young people of our churches should seek to win their comrades and companions for Christ? This could be done in many cases if the pastor and the church officers would show their sympathy by their presence, would counsel the young people so that they might be saved from making grievous mistakes. The young people of our churches might be com-

pletely transformed if this mission were held up before them.

(*d*) The Sunday-school should be counted an evangelizing agency. Since it is true that the majority of the people coming into the church come from the ranks of the Sunday-school scholars, we have an illustration which to say the least is forceful, but we have only begun our work in this direction. The majority of people in the church to-day come to Christ before they are twenty years of age, and if we miss the organization of our Sunday-schools along this line we are guilty at least of a mistake for which we will one day be called to an account. Could there not be arranged conferences with the superintendents and the teachers, the older scholars in the school, when prayer would be offered for the unsaved and an effort be made to lead them to Christ. What we need, however, is to be definite in our work.

(*e*) The church itself should be thoroughly organized. Is there any better suggestion to be made than that concerning the circle of prayer?

#### HOW TO FORM A PRAYER CIRCLE.

1. Dedicate yourself to God for this service of intercession.

2. Ask him for the anointing of the Holy Spirit, that you may be "a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto 'this' work."

3. Ask that you may be guided as to whom you should invite to join the circle of prayer.

4. In prayer seek for guidance as to all details of individual or collective prayer, such as times of prayer or meeting together and subjects.

5. Watch for answers, and any indications of answers, to the prayers offered; but do not be discouraged if defi-

nite answers be delayed. Intercessory prayer often requires the exercise of much faith and patience.

Why should it not be possible for the pastor of the church to call upon his members to unite with him in a prayer circle, and perhaps have numerous circles in his congregation, which should meet from time to time with some degree of regularity? In many parts of our country this is already done and some of our most successful pastors are following this line of work.

Second. The evangelistic church is a spiritual church, and that church may be counted spiritual in which the Holy Ghost has his rightful place. If we should make it a rule in our churches to devise no plans, adopt no methods without these things were all submitted to God, and we were conscious of his approval a new day would dawn upon us. That church is spiritual in which the minister as well as a goodly number of the church people are wholly surrendered to Christ. When he has the right of way in our lives blessing will surely follow and the unsaved in large numbers will be won to him.

#### THE CHURCH SERVICE.

There is much criticism to-day concerning the Church, which is positively unjust. It is quite useless to say that there are no flaws in the present organization as men can see it, but it is also equally true that in the best ordered homes, in those households where there is the greatest amount of peace and comfort, there are elements of weakness. One could break up his home in less than three months if he should parade the flaws of his home life before all who would listen to him. It is both unjust to the Church and disloyal to Christ for one to keep constantly harping upon the weakness of our church life,

when there is so much on the other side to arouse enthusiasm and to provoke the most generous affection, and yet without having the least spirit of harsh criticism, it is, alas, also true that concerning the services of our Church, the following may be justly stated:

First: The service is too formal. Formality is generally observed at the expense of spiritual power and life. In very many of our churches from one year's end to the other, there is no variation of the service. An invocation, frequently singing by a choir which cannot be understood, three hymns by the congregation sung in a half-hearted manner in many of our churches, two prayers by the minister, one short and the other long, a sermon of varying length, a benediction, and the service is over. It is inconceivable that the man of the world who cares nothing for the sentiment of the service and who feels no special obligation to attend church, should be interested by that which he knows will be the same whether he attends the service on the Atlantic Coast, on the Pacific, in the northern portion of our country or in the extreme south. It would be far from me to wish too great an informality in the worship of God and the conduct of the services of his sanctuary, but I am quite sure that the time is upon us when if we would attract attention to him who is able to save to the uttermost, we must do the unusual thing.

One of our great Scotch preachers has said that the disposition which some of us have to pray regularly three times a day, is well enough in itself, but may not accomplish its purpose, for the devil knows concerning our purpose, and he says that man will pray at morning, at noon and at night, and whenever he prays I will be there to attract his attention to other things, and his prayer will be lifeless and indifferent. Could he not say the same

thing concerning some of the services of our churches? If he knows anything at all, he must know just what we are going to do, for we know this ourselves.

John Robertson, the Scotch preacher, some little time ago, preached a sermon on that text found in 1 Peter ii. 7: "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious," and he said if the verse should be rightly read it would be like this, "Unto you therefore which believe," then there is a break in the manuscript, or a pause, and the word, "*Precious,*" might be translated "*preciousness,*" or to change it again, it might be translated "*Hallelujah,*" and his interpretation was that Peter is writing along in his message and finds himself saying, "Unto you therefore which believe," and suddenly there came to him a vision of the one who had chosen him to be his follower and sent him forth to preach, had forgiven him his wanderings, and sent a special messenger after his resurrection, and he is so full of emotion that suddenly he breaks forth with an exclamation of, "preciousness or hallelujah." Such a break as this in the service of an ordinary church would be counted a most extraordinary thing, but I can conceive that there might come into a church a great infusion of new life if there should be a disposition on the part of those who preach and teach to yield themselves more perfectly to him who witnesses to Christ and allow him to have his way with us and through us, instead of our own will concerning that which might be proper in our judgment.

Again, may it not be said that the Church is too cold. There are certain things which may cause this condition. Following Christ afar off would make it possible; coming in touch with the world would produce it as an inevitable result; even indifference would not be without influence in the production of such a state of affairs. I



can think of no one thing that would so bring new life to the Church, warmth to the preacher and a glow of enthusiasm to every department of service as the cultivation of the spirit of evangelism, or in other words, a devotion of the membership of the Church to the winning of souls to Christ.

Mr. Spurgeon used to tell of a census taker who went about the city of London, particularly in his part of the great city, to secure such information as might be valuable to his workers. He found an old couple living in an attractive-looking house, everything outside was neat and inside it was almost perfect. The old people were sitting on either side of a fire-place, so far as the visitor could see, in perfect comfort, and when the questions had been answered he said to them, "I should think you would be very happy. You are away from the turmoil of life, you have fought your battles and won your victories, and you are here now in the evening time of your existence together, with naught to disturb you or make you afraid," and the old lady made response, saying: "Well, we are not happy; we used to be, when we heard the sounds of children's voices about the house, but now we are here alone, and we have neither chick nor child about us. We sit here all the day long, my husband and I; he looks at me and I look at him, until we almost grow sick of the sight of each other. Oh," she said, "if we could only hear the children again we would have joy." This is a picture of many a church with the minister preaching to the people and the people simply looking at him, until sometimes he feels that he would welcome anything if only the church would be aroused, the formality driven away and the coldness depart. I know of nothing that would cause this result to be so quickly apparent as to

hear the sound of the voices of those who are new-born babes in Christ Jesus.

A soul winning church is never a church spiritually cold. The two positions are positively irreconcilable.

May it not also be true that the Church is too indefinite in its work. Wherever there is a successful church to-day, without exception that church will be found to be carrying on a definite work, both at home and abroad. The minister plans his work and works his plan. If he preaches a series of sermons, it is in order that some result may be accomplished not only in the present, but in the future; if he has a social gathering, it is in order that through this gathering he may accomplish some other purpose; if he makes pastoral calls, it is because he earnestly hopes to bring his influence to bear upon his people to lead them to take some new position for aggressive work for Christ. If business men must plan their business, and they must, then why should not the leaders of the Church plan their work, which is more important than any business in the world to-day, for the King's business not only requires haste, but requires ingenuity and careful planning. Why would it not be possible at the beginning of the church year for the minister and his officers to definitely decide that every aim and every effort throughout the year should be to accomplish certain definite spiritual results, and for this they would plan and pray and work.

Nothing is so inspiring as the music of the church service, and nothing can be more distressing. It is quite as inconsistent to have an unconverted choir as to have an unconverted minister, for both lead in the worship of God. It is just as reasonable for a minister to preach in an unknown tongue as for a choir to sing after this fashion, and it is almost the exception rather than the

rule to understand many of the choirs of our important churches. Sometimes the music fails because the words and the music clash; sometimes it fails because the subject of the hymn is utterly foreign to the main part of the service, and frequently it fails because we attach too little importance to it as an element in reaching and influencing the lives of the people. It is quite true that the theology of very many people is obtained from the hymns they sing. Little children singing "Alas and did my Saviour bleed," catch an idea of the atonement; when they sing, "Jesus paid it all," they begin to have some conception of justification, and under the influence of, "Nearer my God to thee," they learn great lessons of fellowship with Christ. It is said that one of the most attractive features of Mr. Spurgeon's service was the singing of his great congregation, when no choir took the place of the singing of the people, and when even an organ was dispensed with in order that the people might stand together and praise God, as they did in a most wonderful way, and yet what could be better than the choir of singers, consecrated to Christ, enthusiastic in their singing, because they realized that next to the minister they have to do with the reaching of the people, and in many cases beyond the minister, they have a power over the unsaved.

"It is impossible to hold the unconverted masses without interesting them. In gaining this purpose, the power of song has, in France, proved most effective. The Moody and Sankey songs are translated and sung quite as much in Paris as in New York. The wanderers on the street at night can be thus attracted. These songs are open to criticism on grounds of reverence and truthfulness, as well as of æsthetics. But for their purpose of

drawing and holding the masses, they are unequalled. Scores of people will come off the street to sing

“The half was never told,’

who would turn away from the most eloquent sermon.”<sup>1</sup>

What power there could be for good if frequently in the Sunday evening services at least sweet Gospel hymns should be announced, the whole congregation asked to sing, occasionally a solo sung by one who had prayed over the singing as the pastor ought to pray over his preaching. If the preaching of the Church to-day needs to be turned into evangelistic channels, there is far greater necessity for insisting that the singing should be more evangelistic.

Mr. Moody was a shrewd leader of men, and there were few men who ever went beyond him in exalting the power of the singing of a hymn in which there was to be found the spirit of the Gospel. The preaching is, of course, the important part of the entire service, for by the foolishness of preaching God has ordained that men should come to know Christ and to understand his beauty, but there are certain points which must be emphasized in connection with the preaching which is to be evangelistic in its purpose.

First: The truth preached must be experienced. No man can talk with any success about prayer and be prayerless, about consecration and withhold his gift from the altar, about love for souls and himself be indifferent to lost men.

“No one preaches the truth with power until he has had a deep personal experience of its power. The truths which were so mighty on the lips of Luther and Wesley

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<sup>1</sup> “The working church.”

and Finney and Moody had first been mighty in their own hearts. Suppose we ministers begin with ourselves, and make sure that we are ready for disinterested service; make it quite sure that we ourselves have been to Golgotha, and have there been crucified, so that we are dead, and the life in us is the life of Christ; make it quite sure that our own hearts are aglow with the love that overflows to God and man. Then we may expect that these neglected truths of Jesus will be preached to the churches with mighty power until church membership really stands for Christian service, Christian sacrifice and Christian love. And then this Gospel of God will indeed be the power of God unto salvation to the multitudes to whom he is now unreal.

“When God becomes real to men, the guilt of sin becomes real; and, as we have seen, God is actualized when he is interpreted in the terms of present-day truth and in the every-day life of living epistles.”

Second: Christ must be preached in all his fullness. It will not do to ignore any part of the scheme of redemption. One might just as truly err in being over-zealous in what is properly called evangelistic services, as being indifferent on the other side to the necessity of preaching what we call the old, old story of Jesus and his love. Truth is always powerful if it is preached in all of its fullness.

“The rapid growth of ‘Christian Science,’ so-called, is a reaction from a Christianity which ignores the physical, and therefore does not recognize the interrelation of soul and body; precisely as Unitarianism was a reaction from an orthodoxy which practically ignored the humanity of our Lord; and reactions are naturally one-sided and extreme. The remedy for them is to preach the well-rounded truth. We are slowly learning by costly exper-

ience that no great Scriptural truth can be safely neglected; sooner or later it appears in caricature."<sup>1</sup>

Yet there is this to be said, and it must be said with emphasis, that for one who is in sin and therefore absolutely lost there is no story which can keep and lift and save but the story of the crucified one.

Dr. Jowett, of Birmingham, England, tells the story of the late Dr. Berry which illustrates my point. He returned from his service one day to find a child waiting at his door who asked him if he would not come at once and help to get her mother in. He did not understand her request, thinking possibly she was in the cold and had been turned out of her home, but at last in response to her earnest entreaties he went and found the mother dying. He did what he could to help her, but seemed utterly powerless. He told the story of the Prodigal Son, but she seemed uninterested. He brought to her attention the story of the reclaiming of fallen women and Christ blessing the little children, that she might know that there was no one so weak and no one so sinful as to be beyond the power of his love, and she was still unmoved, and at last he said to his friend, she drew out of me bit by bit the story of Jesus born in Bethlehem, living in Nazareth, preaching in Galilee, suffering in Jerusalem, dying on the cross, rising from the dead and ascending into glory, and as I told her the story her eyes filled with tears and her lips trembled and then there came a look of ineffable peace and joy, and she passed away, and said Dr. Berry to his friend, "I believe I got her in."

This is the only story for a lost and ruined race, and we cannot be evangelistic if we neglect it, nor can we expect God to bless us in the winning of souls.

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<sup>1</sup> "The next great awakening."

Third. Preaching, to be evangelistic, must be done with the confident expectation of results. The unsaved people in our congregation are quick to detect our own anticipation of failure; they are equally sensitive to our confident belief that what we say is to have weight with them and may be used of God to save their souls.

Over in the almost midnight darkness of Africa toiled Robert and Mary Moffatt; for ten years they labored on without a single convert. They were four hundred miles beyond the place of civilization. They had only about them the most degraded savages, yet they never for a moment faltered and never for a single moment did they have any other thought than this, that they were sure to be successful. A letter was received from a friend asking if there was anything of use which could be sent by their minister. "The significant answer of Mary Moffatt was, 'Send us a communion service. We shall want it some day.' It came three years later, the day before the first converts were baptized."

With such a spirit as this in the preaching, with supreme confidence in God and in his Word, with absolute certainty that if Christ be preached faithfully God's Word cannot return unto him void, there must be increased efficiency in our church services and great numbers of people brought to Christ. Yet if the church of Christ could only be aroused to put into practice his preaching and teaching in this present day, and other days, how men would be helped, how souls would be won and how the very wilderness would blossom as a rose.

"Let us suppose a church somewhere, whose members have such an enthusiasm for humanity that when they lie awake nights they are planning not how to make money, but how to make men. Their supreme desire is to help the world in general and their own community in particu-

lar. They are striving daily to remove every moral and physical evil; trying to give every child who comes into the world the best possible chance; longing and working and praying and spending themselves and their substance to save men from sin and ignorance and suffering! Let us suppose the whole church is co-operating to this end. What a transformation such a church would work in any community! How it would 'reach the masses'! How it would grow! How it would be talked about and written up! Men would make pilgrimages to study its workings and its success. Yet such a church ought not to be in the least degree peculiar."<sup>1</sup> And such a church as this is possible in every community in the world if only the Word of God is received as authentic, if only Christ is believed on and his teachings practiced. That such a church is not to be seen to-day in many of our cities and towns is to our reproach.

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<sup>1</sup> "The next great awakening."