

8V
4207
K4a

PREACHING IN THE EARLY CHURCH

The Moore Lectures

By
HUGH THOMSON KERR

*Shadyside Presbyterian Church
Pittsburgh, Pa.*



NEW YORK
Fleming H. Revell Company
LONDON AND EDINBURGH

Copyright, MCMXLII, by
FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

All rights reserved: no part of this book may be reproduced in any form without permission from the Publisher, except by a reviewer desiring to quote brief passages for inclusion in a notice to be inserted in a newspaper or periodical.

Quotations in this book from the American Standard Edition of the Revised Bible are used by permission of the International Council of Religious Education.

Theology Library
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT
California

Printed in the United States of America

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
London: 99 Anerley Road

TO THE CONGREGATION OF
THE SHADYSIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN GRATITUDE FOR
TWENTY-NINE HAPPY YEARS OF PREACHING

8-56

R. W. Frank

PREFACE

THESE lectures on "Preaching in the Early Church" were delivered before the faculty, student body and friends of the San Francisco Theological Seminary, San Anselmo, California. They are the second in a series of lectures to be given from time to time under the T. Verner Moore Foundation. Professor Moore was for twenty years a member of the faculty of the San Francisco Seminary and by bequest established a foundation for a public lectureship to be known as the "T. V. Moore Lectures." The bequest provided that "the lectures shall be held at such times, and in such public places as shall be determined by the faculty of said Seminary, and shall be given by such persons as may be appointed by the Trustees of said Seminary upon nomination by the faculty. The lectures shall be positive expositions or defenses of some aspect, or aspects, of Biblical Study or of Christian truth, and shall be given only by men who are known as sincere believers in what is known historically as the evangelical Reformed faith."

President Baird, in inviting me to deliver the second series in the foundation, suggested that I choose the subject of preaching. There is a perennial fascination for all preachers and for many laymen in following discussions upon the art of preaching. Several important lectureships have given us an expanding literature on the subject. Recently, however, a change seems to have come over the lecturers, and the art and method

of preaching have been somewhat obscured, while the message of the pulpit has been emphasized, with the result that we have had recently a series of volumes devoted largely to the interpretation of Christianity and its applicability to the needs of today.

Perhaps it is true that the homiletic vein has been worked out and that the best things have already been said on the art of preaching. Certainly it is difficult for anyone to re-create the enthusiasm some of us once had for the lectures of Phillips Brooks, Beecher, Storrs, Stalker, Forsyth, George Adam Smith, Sylvester Horne, Jowett. All in all, the art of preaching is a personal discovery, and old John Brown of Haddington long ago pointed the way. "There are," he said, "three things necessary for being a sound expositor of the Word: the first, a competent knowledge of the original tongues,—that's a matter of mere plodding, any man who is not incurably lazy may get that; second, personal piety,—that any man may get too, if he will only ask for it; third, common sense,—and if you dinna bring that wi' you, I canna tell whar ye can get it!"

I have sought in these lectures to find a middle ground between the art and content of preaching. The historical approach to the subject is not new. Dr. John Albert Broadus has a valuable little book, *The History of Preaching*, which covers the entire field of Church history and is lighted up with touches of genius. His pupil, Dr. Edwin Charles Dargan, followed up the modest work of Dr. Broadus with two large volumes tracing the history of preaching from the earliest days to modern times, but does not seek to make the application to present-day realities. I have attempted a less ambitious study. The period between the New Testament and the break-up of the Roman Empire—a pe-

riod including such names as St. Paul, Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Ignatius, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, Basil, the Gregorians, Chrysostom, Ambrose, and Augustine—is the formative period in the teaching and theology of the Church and presents a unique field for investigation concerning the method and the message by which the early Christian leaders conquered the world for Christ. I have no claim to scholarship necessary to perform this task with full competency. I can only claim the interest of an intellectually-minded pastor and preacher who has nourished his own soul upon themes not immediately connected with the task of the week.

To the president, faculty and student body of the San Francisco Seminary I extend my gratitude for a coveted opportunity and a memorable experience. I would like to thank many of my friends for their help but I refrain from naming them lest I should obligate them to conclusions which are my own.

H. T. K.

*Shadyside Presbyterian Church,
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*

CONTENTS

I.	THE APOSTOLIC PREACHING	13
II.	THE PREACHING OF THE FATHERS	49
III.	THE PREACHING OF THE GREEK APOLOGISTS	90
IV.	THE PREACHING OF THE LATIN APOLOGISTS	125
V.	THE GREAT GREEK PREACHERS	156
VI.	THE GREAT LATIN PREACHERS	190
	BOOKS OF REFERENCE	231
	INDEX	236

I

THE APOSTOLIC PREACHING

IT is the purpose of these lectures to trace the history of preaching from New Testament times to the death of Augustine, a period of approximately four hundred years. A detailed analysis of this epoch-making period belongs to Church history. Our interest has to do with preaching during these first four centuries, and even in this limited area it will be impossible to do more than point out, by way of emphasis, the path the preachers of that age took. The outline followed is simple and obvious to anyone who knows the history of those times. The first lecture is devoted to the preaching of the Apostles themselves as recorded in the New Testament; the second lecture deals with the preaching of the Apostolic Fathers; the third and fourth lectures with the Greek and Latin Apologists; and the fifth and sixth with the great Greek and Latin preachers. Attempt is made to show how such a study can help the preacher of today discover both the message and the method that led to the overthrow of paganism and the triumph of the Christian faith.

We begin with apostolic preaching and the New Testament. The New Testament is and always will be our best textbook on preaching. It is the quarry from which men of every generation must dig. It presents not only the best technique of preaching but the only message that justifies the name of preaching. It intro-

duces us to the best preachers. John, the herald of the Christ, came preaching. He was the voice of one crying "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."¹ Jesus came preaching. It was the testimony of those who heard Him that "never man spake as this man." The necessity to preach lay upon Him like a heavenly mandate. "I must preach," He said. His last commission to His disciples was, "Go . . . preach the gospel."² His preaching is recorded in the Four Gospels and these documents undoubtedly contain sermon material used by the Apostles. The Gospels, as we have them, are the product of long oral tradition and were delayed in taking form. They were written after the full revelation of Christ, in His death, resurrection and living presence, was made known. The men who wrote them were in the secret of history.

The Apostles came preaching. Strictly speaking, apostolic preaching began on the Day of Pentecost. On that day the redemptive work of Christ was complete. On that day the promised "Day of the Lord" was ushered in. On that day the Christian Church was born. On that day there was a new uprush of life. R. Newton Flew, Principal of Wesley House, Cambridge, in his scholarly work, *Jesus and His Church*, says that on the Day of Pentecost "a new era had been inaugurated by the Spirit as a result of the revelation of God in the whole work of Christ, in His earthly life, in His suffering on the cross, in His resurrection from the dead."³ We understand that. With Pentecost the work of Christ was complete. The Gospel was ready to be proclaimed. "This Jesus," said Peter, "did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. Being therefore

¹ Matthew 3:2.

³ *Jesus and His Church*, page 254.

² Mark 16:15.

by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this.”¹ Dr. R. W. Dale, who was both a preacher and theologian, was wont to say that while Jesus “came to preach the gospel, His chief object in coming was that there might be a gospel to preach.”²

While Christian preaching begins at Pentecost, the theme of the preaching of Jesus and that of apostolic preaching is the same. Jesus came preaching the kingdom of God. He announced that the kingdom of God was at hand. After Pentecost the Apostles proclaimed that the kingdom had come. If the significance of this position were understood there would be less confusion regarding the meaning of the term “the kingdom of God.” The Apostles clearly understood it. There was no confusion in their minds. We may not be able to accept all that is involved in what has come to be called “realized eschatology,” but we are compelled to face, none the less, the implications of that teaching. The message of Jesus was, “Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”³ The message that followed Pentecost was to the effect that the kingdom had come. In the first Christian sermon Peter interpreted for the people, and for us, the full significance of the Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit. On that day old things passed away. Divisions and class distinctions of sex and race and nationality within the Christian fellowship were transcended. The knowledge of the glory of God, which had been revealed in the face of Jesus Christ, was confirmed. The new society, the beloved community, the church, the *koinonia*, took form. Salvation from sin and fear and death was experienced.

¹ Acts 2:32.

³ Matthew 3:2.

² *The Atonement*, chapter 2.

Men were reborn into a new world, and what a new world it was! Again and again in the New Testament the contrast between the old and the new world is set forth. ✓ This salvation was a salvation from sin, from fear, from cowardice, from secularism, and "Salvation from sin, from pessimism, from the sense that all things pass to inevitable destruction, from materialism, is not for us Christians to be attained by dreaming of a world beyond this world, or by believing in some imminent catastrophe, but by plunging head first into Christian faith and fellowship."¹ It was the creation of a new age, a new era. That is how the Apostles looked upon what had taken place on the Day of Pentecost.

We hear the new note in Peter's first sermon:

"Ye men of Judæa, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and give ear unto my words. For these are not drunken, as ye suppose; seeing it is but the third hour of the day; but this is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel: And it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: yea and on my servants and on my handmaidens in those days will I pour forth of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heaven above, and signs on the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the day of the Lord come, that great and notable day: and it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."²

This is the day of the Lord. This is the outpouring of God's Spirit upon all flesh. This is the kingdom of

¹ Hoskyns, *Cambridge Sermons*, page 28.

² Acts 2: 14-21.

God, the new age, the new world, the present power of the living Christ. It is quite true that the stars did not fall, the sun was not turned into darkness, the moon did not become blood. There was no fire, no vapor of smoke, no catastrophe, no darkness. But what happened at Pentecost was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. This is the day of the Lord, the new age, the new world, the kingdom of God which is righteousness, joy and peace. Whatever God in His providence has yet in store for this world of blood and iron, of clouds and thunder, of sun and stars, of war and tumult, we may be sure of this, that the coming of Christ into history, the coming of the Spirit of God is no passing thing done in a corner, no result of necessary evolutionary progress, no outcome of interwoven world movements; but a world-transforming miracle, a crisis in the life of humanity that put an end to the old world order and established in our midst the kingdom of God.

The phrase, "the kingdom of God," frequently on the lips of Jesus, has been a fruitful theme for debate. It is charged that the Christian Church, following the leading of St. Paul, has been disloyal to the teaching of Jesus in neglecting to emphasize and to proclaim as central His teaching of the kingdom. There have been great differences of opinion as to what is meant by the kingdom. Augustine identified it with the Church and Schweitzer interprets it in terms of eschatology. In our day it has been identified with a social order, a sky-blue Utopia that is to be brought in through our co-operation, a new social order when all men's good shall be "each man's rule, and universal Peace lie like a shaft of light across the land."¹ This has been the dream of the humanists and humanitarians of our generation.

¹ Tennyson, *The Golden Year*.

There are those, however, who think this is a wrong interpretation, a misplaced emphasis and that it is due largely to this emphasis that we are in our present bewilderment and disillusionment. Professor W. Macneile Dixon, a recent Gifford lecturer, says, "Whence come our present discontents? Unless I am greatly mistaken, from the collapse of the high-pitched expectations of a regenerated human society. Believe in it if you can, the land of earthly happiness that was to replace the old and now discarded paradise to come. You cannot believe it will be tomorrow, nor in a century, nor in ten. That bubble has burst. And what now is left? Neither the old dream nor the new. And the malady of our age is just the thought that nothing or next to nothing is in truth worth attempting or achieving."¹ It is evident that too large a load has been laid upon the phrase "the kingdom of God." When we turn to the teaching of Jesus and His followers we find that other expressions were used and used interchangeably. Jesus came preaching "the kingdom of God."² But it is also stated that He came preaching "the word."³ He came preaching "the gospel,"⁴ preaching "the good tidings of the kingdom of God."⁵

In like manner the New Testament uses interchangeably many expressions when referring to the preaching of the early church. The disciples were commissioned to "make disciples of all nations,"⁶ "to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ."⁷ They proclaimed "this Jesus,"⁸ "the Christ,"⁹ "the gospel,"¹⁰ "the word of God,"¹¹ "Jesus and the resurrection,"¹² "the

¹ *The Human Situation*, page 425.

² Matthew 4: 17, Luke 16: 16. ³ Mark 2: 2.

⁴ Luke 9: 6.

⁵ Luke 8: 1.

⁶ Matthew 28: 19.

⁷ Acts 5: 42.

⁸ Acts 17: 3.

⁹ Acts 8: 5.

¹⁰ Acts 8: 25.

¹¹ Acts 13: 5.

¹² Acts 17: 18.

word,"¹ "good tidings concerning the kingdom of God."²

St. John uses the term "eternal life."³ St. Paul uses a variety of expressions. He speaks of preaching "the gospel,"⁴ "Christ crucified,"⁵ "the word of faith,"⁶ "Jesus Christ as Lord,"⁷ "the unsearchable riches of Christ,"⁸ "the word,"⁹ "Christ,"¹⁰ "Jesus,"¹¹ "Jesus Christ,"¹² "the word of the cross,"¹³ "the faith,"¹⁴ "peace to you that were far off, and peace to them that were nigh,"¹⁵ "the mystery of the gospel."¹⁶ It is evident that the preaching of the early church concentrated upon no colorful phrase such as "the kingdom" but presented Jesus Christ, in His life, death and resurrection.

This emphasis upon the person and work of Christ receives significant interpretation in the writings of Professor C. H. Dodd of Cambridge. Dodd makes a distinction between what he calls apostolic preaching or *kerygma* and apostolic teaching or *didaché*:

"Reflection on the epistles [he says] will show that for all the individuality of the writers and their creative power in the realm of theological and ethical thought, their work presupposes everywhere a common tradition of the centre, by which they and their readers are bound, however boldly and freely they may interpret and apply it in the rapidly changing situations of an expanding Church. Broadly speaking, we may recognize two aspects of this central tradition. On the one hand it is a 'preaching' or 'proclamation' (*kerygma*) about God's action for the salvation of

¹ Acts 8:4.

² Acts 8:12.

³ John 17:2.

⁴ I Corinthians 9:16.

⁵ I Corinthians 1:23.

⁶ Romans 10:8.

⁷ II Corinthians 4:5.

⁸ Ephesians 3:8.

⁹ II Timothy 4:2.

¹⁰ I Corinthians 15:12.

¹¹ II Corinthians 1:19. ¹² Romans 16:25. ¹³ I Corinthians 1:18.

¹⁴ Galatians 1:23.

¹⁵ Ephesians 2:17.

¹⁶ Ephesians 6:19.

men, by which the Church was called into existence, and which it announces to all men everywhere as the ground of faith and hope. On the other hand it embodies an ethical ideal for corporate and individual life. The most general term for this is 'teaching' (*didaché*)."¹

The *kerygma* or preaching was the message that challenged the non-Christian world. The *didaché* or teaching implemented the preaching. It was the application of the preaching to life, the enforcing of the ethical and moral implications of the *kerygma*. Sometimes the preaching and the teaching stand side by side in the New Testament. This is true of the Gospels. Sometimes they form separate sections, as in the epistles to the Romans and Hebrews. "For the early church, then, to preach," says Dr. Dodd, "was by no means the same thing as to deliver moral instruction or exhortation. While the Church was concerned to hand on the teaching of the Lord, it was not by this that it made converts. It was by *kerygma*, says Paul, not by *didaché*, that it pleased God to save men."² And he adds, "Much of our preaching in Church at the present day would not have been recognized by the early Christians as *kerygma*. It is teaching, or exhortation (*paraklesis*), or it is what they called *homilia*, that is, the more or less informal discussion of various aspects of Christian life and thought, addressed to a congregation already established in the faith."³

The earliest recorded formula of the apostolic *kerygma* is found in the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians. It introduces Paul's great argument for the

¹ *History and the Gospel*, pages 50-51.

² *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments*, page 6.

³ *Ibid.*, page 5.

resurrection. "I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures."¹ Here in the briefest and most compact form we have the substance of the *kerygma* of the early church. It presents clearly and briefly the fact that Christ Jesus lived and died and rose again for us and for our salvation. A similar formula appears in the opening verses of the epistle to the Romans. "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, which he promised afore through his prophets in the holy scriptures, concerning his Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead; even Jesus Christ our Lord."² The substance of the preaching is here described as "the gospel of God" and as coming to men according to the promise of the prophets. It is important to make a note of this additional fact, as it will appear and reappear in the *kerygma* formula of the early church.

The first preaching outline preserved for us is Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost. It is the first recorded Christian sermon. It is what we would call great preaching. There is a thrill in it. Peter had all the qualities that go to make up a great preacher. He had personality. He had courage. Like Luther, he knew how to get mad, how to feel deeply. He had experienced a soul-transforming repentance and he was under the compulsion of a great faith and a great love. The sermon in abbreviated outline is as follows:

¹ I Corinthians 15: 3-4.

² Romans 1: 1-4.

“Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay: whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. . . .

“This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear. . . . Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified. . . . Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”¹

Here is found the substance of the Christian *kerygma*. It contains a statement of the person and work of our Lord. Christ Jesus came into the midst of life, of the line of David, as foretold in prophecy. He lived and taught, died upon the cross, was raised from the dead and now exalted in power has poured out His Spirit upon men. Therefore, repent and turn to God. This is the content of the apostolic preaching which we find repeated again and again in the sermon outlines preserved for us in the New Testament.

The second *kerygma* formula is Peter's address following the healing of the lame man. We give this, and other outlines, so that they may produce their own impression:

“Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this man? or why

¹ Acts 2: 22-38.

fasten ye your eyes on us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Servant Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied before the face of Pilate, when he had determined to release him. But ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of life; whom God raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. . . . But the things which God fore-showed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; and that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus.”¹

Here again are projected the simple central facts of the Christian faith. They are stated as facts. The theology which grew up around these facts had not yet appeared. Here we have the same reference to Old Testament prophecy and the simple factual statements of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; the same warning as to judgment and the same demand for repentance. The preacher takes it for granted that those who hear him are able to fill in the story of the life of Christ from a fuller and a more adequate knowledge which they possess of the life of Jesus.

The record of the third sermon delivered also by Peter and on the occasion of his arraignment before the Sanhedrin is tersely sketched. He was reiterating perhaps what they had recently heard:

“Ye rulers of the people, and elders, be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name

¹ Acts 3: 12-15, 18-20.

of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even in him doth this man stand here before you whole. He is the stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner. And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.”¹

Again the same notes are emphasized. The historic name “Jesus of Nazareth” is used. Every effort is made to bring men face to face with the, as yet unchallenged, facts of history. Jesus Christ was crucified. God raised Him from the dead. He is the fulfillment of prophecy. Therefore, think well upon what He is and what He has done, for He is the only Saviour and apart from Him there is no salvation. There is no toning down of the facts and no note of apology. The steps are sure and the appeal authoritative. “The preacher who is but feeling his way to a theology,” says Dr. P. T. Forsyth, “is but preparing to be a preacher, however eloquent he may have become.”²

The fourth sermon is amazingly short. It reads like a familiar and accepted formula akin to a creedal statement. Doubtless it was filled in according to the needs of the audience and the talent of the preacher. It would be a misinterpretation, indeed, to present the preaching of the early church as a repetition of a cut and dried formula, an unvarying statement unmediated by the personality of the preacher. What we have is doubtless a report of what was a longer and a more impassioned utterance. The sermon follows the deliverance of the apostle from prison. It is Peter who

¹ Acts 4:10-12.

² *Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind*, page 199.

speaks, but with him are associated all the Apostles. "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging him on a tree. Him did God exalt with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey him."¹ In this brief outline the same facts are set forth and are followed by the same challenging conclusion. It is God, "the God of our fathers," who is at work. The crucifixion is spoken of as "hanging on a tree." The resurrection is described as exaltation to the right hand of God. The evidence presented is corroborated by living witnesses. The gift of the Holy Spirit is also a living witness to the presence of the living Christ. The note is added that repentance, which is always demanded, is a gift of the crucified and risen Christ Himself.

The fifth sermon by Peter recorded in the Book of the Acts is of peculiar interest. It marks a new approach, since it was delivered to a non-Jewish audience on the occasion of the reception of the Gentile Cornelius into the Christian fellowship. Nevertheless, it follows the same lines but gives in fuller detail the story of the life of Christ and perhaps reveals the beginning of a more systematic and comprehensive presentation of the life of Christ. It is probably out of such extended references to the earthly life of our Lord that the gospels themselves were developed. The sermon, as we have it, is as follows:

"The word which he sent unto the children of Israel,

¹ Acts 5: 29-32.

preaching good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all)—that saying ye yourselves know, which was published throughout all Judæa, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; even Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the country of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom also they slew, hanging him on a tree. Him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, even to us, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is he who is ordained of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead. To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins.”¹

Reading these tremendously significant words belonging to the oldest preaching tradition of the Church a profound impression is produced upon us by the force, the urgency, the authority of the Gospel mandate here set forth. We see, as under our very eyes, the story of Jesus unfolding and taking form. The facts of His life, His teaching, His death and resurrection, are set forth in simple and impelling language and the same urgency for repentance, faith and forgiveness is also present. There is nothing approaching argument. The world-shattering facts are presented without apology and the demand is made that life square with this revelation of God in Christ. Indeed true preaching can never be merely apologetic; it must be authoritative. It does not argue; it affirms. It is not defensive; it is dogmatic. It does not suggest a com-

¹ Acts 10: 36-43.

promise; it marches to the sound of the trumpet. This does not mean that it presents unreasonable dogmas and issues unreasonable mandates. The wooing note is never absent. The voice is that of an appeal. It makes its approach by issuing an invitation, "Come now, and let us reason together." It asks for a response, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." Nevertheless, true preaching speaks with assurance, certainty, authority. It proclaims the message, This do, and thou shalt live. Refuse, and thou shalt die. That is the note sounded in the great prophetic preaching, "Why will ye die, thou and thy people?" It is sounded in the preaching of Jesus, "Except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish." It is heard in the apostolic preaching, which never ceased to proclaim the fact that "we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God."

When we pass to the preaching of Stephen and that of Paul the same selective emphasis is apparent. It is reported of Augustine that he gave expression to three unfulfilled desires. He longed that he might see Christ in the flesh, Rome in her glory, and Paul in the pulpit. We share the desire to see Paul in the pulpit. When the challenging voice of Peter and the voice of Stephen were silenced, the voice of Paul was heard. He possessed a trained and talented mind. His personality was cast in a different mold from that of the Twelve. He had a massive intellect, a great heart, and all that he had belonged to Christ. "I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."¹ He proclaimed the same evangel, the same *kerygma*. His first recorded sermon was delivered in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia. It was

¹ Philippians 3:8.

the Sabbath. He had been listening as one of the congregation to the reading of the law and the prophets and when invited to speak he stood up and like a practised orator gestured with his hand and said, "Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, hearken." Then followed a brief résumé of Hebrew history after the pattern set by Stephen.

We cannot understand Paul's approach without appreciating the method of Stephen. The sermon Stephen preached preceding his martyrdom set the standard of preaching followed by Paul and opened up a new approach to the Old Testament. Stephen was charged with seeking the overthrow of the temple. In his sermon, however, he showed that a true interpretation of Scripture proved clearly that the worship of Jehovah had never been confined to the temple or to Jerusalem, for God had been with Abraham in Mesopotamia, with Jacob and Joseph, with Moses in Egypt, with the Israelites in the wilderness. In the prayer of dedication of the temple it was affirmed that God was not confined to temples made with hands. Stephen charged the leaders of the Jews with spiritual blindness. His sermon was a courageous argument for the spirituality of the religion of the Old Testament and a clear statement of the claim of Christianity to be the fulfillment of the dreams and hopes of the prophets. Following this same line of interpretation, Paul presented Jesus as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. He came of the seed of David according to promise. This Jesus, John the Baptist heralded. When he came, like the prophets of old, he too was condemned. The sermon then plunged into the very heart of the *kerygma*:

“When they had fulfilled all things that were written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead: and he was seen for many days of them that came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses unto the people. And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers, that God hath fulfilled the same unto our children, in that he raised up Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he hath spoken on this wise, I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David. Because he saith also in another psalm, Thou wilt not give thy Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had in his own generation served the counsel of God, fell asleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: but he whom God raised up saw no corruption. Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man is proclaimed unto you remission of sins: and by him every one that believeth is justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”¹

Therefore, beware! Judgment is sure. Here again we have the same repetition of the Gospel facts. They are, however, set in a larger frame of history. There is more color but not more content. The approach is more cautious, more preparatory, more interpretative. The Old Testament is drawn upon to furnish corroborative evidence for more and more of the life and work of Christ. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, the true interpreter of Scripture, the preacher was enabled to illuminate and adorn the message he proclaimed. It is the same truth, the same message, the same Christ, but the message flows through a different channel. There are shallow channels and there are channels that are

¹ Acts 13: 28-39.

broad and deep. Oliver Wendell Holmes speaks of a clergyman who had a one-story intellect and a one-horse vocabulary. We can never put Paul in that category. His was an outstanding personality. Bishop Phillips Brooks has said:

“Preaching is the communication of truth by man to men. It has in it two essential elements, truth and personality. Neither of those can it spare and still be preaching. The truest truth, the most authoritative statement of God’s will, communicated in any other way than through the personality of brother man to men is not preached truth. Suppose it written on the sky, suppose it embodied in a book which has been so long held in reverence as the direct utterance of God that the vivid personality of the men who wrote its pages has well nigh faded out of it; in neither of these cases is there any preaching. And on the other hand, if men speak to other men that which they do not claim for truth, if they use their powers of persuasion or of entertainment to make other men listen to their speculations, or do their will, or applaud their cleverness, that is not preaching either. The first lacks personality. The second lacks truth. And *preaching is the bringing of truth through personality.*”¹

Paul’s personality was the channel for the greatest preaching the world has known.

These suggestive outlines by no means exhaust the *kerygma* material found embedded in the literature of the New Testament, but the similarity of the structure and content of the outlines already given lead us to conclude that apostolic preaching was modeled on these lines. Analyzing and comparing these sermon outlines, Dodd says:

¹ *Lectures on Preaching*, page 5.

“ These addresses are found to be variations upon a common theme, which recurs in almost stereotyped form. It runs after this fashion: The Messianic age has dawned, and the prophecies are fulfilled. Jesus of Nazareth came in the power of the Spirit, wrought mighty works and taught with authority. He was crucified, dead and buried. The third day He rose again from the dead, and is exalted at the right hand of God as Lord and Christ. He will come again in glory. Meanwhile, the company of those who believe in Him is marked out as the new Israel of God by the gift of the Spirit. Forgiveness and salvation are offered in His name. Therefore repent and believe.”¹

When these sermon outlines are studied as a unity it is discovered that always and everywhere the Gospel is presented as a consistent story of the life and work of Christ. It has been said that Alexander Maclaren fed his people with a three-pronged fork. The Apostles apparently made use of a five-point sermon outline.

The first note in apostolic preaching is the reiterated emphasis upon the prophetic proclamation of the coming Messiah. The Apostles began back in the Old Testament. They did not cast it aside. They rooted their message in prophetic utterances, and the Old Testament became the great source book for their illustrative material. In speaking of his friend, Tennyson said, “ Behold, I dream a dream of good, and mingle all the world with thee.”² In a more profound sense this is what the apostolic preachers did. They mingled all the Old Testament with Christ. Their eyes were opened and they beheld Him everywhere. They saw Him in the Old Testament and they saw Him also in the world of nature. They had come into possession of the key to the Scriptures through the illumination of the Holy

¹ *History and the Gospel*, page 72.

² *In Memoriam*.

Spirit given at Pentecost. The Old Testament became immediately the great Christian apologetic. Indeed it is one of the miracles of the New Testament that, with the gift of the Spirit, an unbelievably new thing in the interpretation of Scripture took place. The Apostles became possessed of spiritual and intellectual insight, a new understanding. Jesus Himself opened "their mind that they might understand the scriptures." That is exactly what happened. From what other source came Peter's strange and startling insight into the meaning of the obscure and ignored passages in the prophets? How did it come about that he could take such a prophecy as that of Joel and say that it was all fulfilled in the Pentecostal miracle? The Apostles laid hold of the Messianic hope of the Old Testament and laid it under tribute in interpreting the life and message of Jesus. It may be that some of the interpretations and emphases do not appeal to us, but the audiences to which the Apostles preached were Jewish. They, themselves, were Jews and to them the Old Testament was the very voice of God. This gave to preaching variety and interest and there is no preaching so vital, so varied, so continually interesting as Bible preaching when it is quickened by spiritual insight and imagination.

In this connection it should not be overlooked that the same influence of the Spirit gave not only new insight into Scripture but also new meaning to nature and history. When Paul began to preach this same Gospel to the pagan world they knew nothing about the Old Testament. Moses meant nothing to them, as he probably means little or nothing to multitudes of our own generation. In his sermon to the Jews of Antioch in Pisidia he followed the usual custom of appealing to

the Old Testament Scriptures but when he preached to the agnostics in the University of Athens he began with their own gods, their own philosophers, their own poets, their own history and then plunged into the Gospel message of Jesus and the resurrection. And then they shut him off. This sermon has often been subjected to criticism because of its inescapable intellectual emphasis. Principal Lindsay says that "Paul went to Corinth, that seat of money-getting and licentiousness, determined to preach no more philosophical sermons, but simply 'Christ and him crucified.'"¹ That, surely, is not true to the facts. Even the Epistle to the Corinthians is evidence against such interpretation. Paul did preach Christ and Him crucified to the Athenians, but when he spoke of Jesus and the resurrection they turned away in derision. The Christian faith is not a thing apart from history. Christ is in history and the Old Testament and the world itself are the preacher's best illustrative material.

The second emphasis in the *kerygma* of the Apostles is the story of the earthly life of our Lord. Prophets had foretold Him and history had announced Him. Born of the seed of Abraham, He lived His life, an earthly human life, among men. In the beginning, the bare announcement of the fact of the birth and life of Jesus was sufficient. The people who listened knew the fact but, as time passed and the Gospel spread beyond the hearsay evidence known in Jerusalem, it was natural that the story should be told gradually in fuller outline and the ethical admonitions and ideals presented in the life and teaching of Jesus set forth. The gospels and the epistles are the natural and the necessary outgrowth of the life of Christ. The story of the life of

¹ *The Acts of the Apostles*, Vol. II, page 86.

Jesus was at first rehearsed orally and that story, as it passed from one to another, was enriched by apostolic memory and divine illumination. The opening verses of St. Luke's gospel reveal clearly that there were many versions of the story in circulation. Some of these were gradually reduced to writing, while others would be known only to those who received their information orally from earlier disciples. The introduction to Luke's gospel is like a window through which we can see the Gospel story taking form:

“Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us, even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus; that thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed.”¹

This reduction to writing of the story of Jesus presupposes the existence of previous oral tradition, much of which was doubtless incorporated into the gospels as we now have them. This oral tradition would form part of the context of the *kerygma* and from this life story moral implications inevitably would be drawn, for the life and character of Jesus is the norm of the conduct and character of His followers. The life of Christ demands a response. It says to every one who hears it:

“‘What think ye of Christ,’ friend? when all’s done and said,

¹ Luke 1: 1-4.

Like you this Christianity or not?
It may be false, but will you wish it true?
Has it your vote to be so if it can? ”¹

The world must make room for Him and when He comes He brings with Him new standards, new ideals, new moral motives. The *kerygma* issues inevitably in the *didaché* and as we proceed with the study of the Fathers, the Apologists, the great Greek and Latin preachers, we will discover how great a part ethics plays in the preaching of the early church. But preaching as such remains always the proclamation of an astounding event in history. This is why the cross of Christ is spoken of as “the power center of the world.” From the Person of Christ come forth both love and righteousness. When the preacher fails to see this truth he becomes a mere journalist. “We are paying bitterly now,” says Dr. Forsyth, “and we shall pay more bitterly yet, in the bewilderment of our youth, for that neglect by the Church to educate its ministry in its own subject at the plastic time, which makes such talk possible. When preachers denounce theology, or a church despises it for literary or social charm, that is to sell the cross to be a pendant at the neck of the handsome world. It is spiritual poverty and baldness, it is not the simplicity in Christ, to be sick of grace, judgment, atonement, and redemption. The holiness of God has become a spent force if a gospel which turns entirely upon it is called metaphysical or academic.”²

The third emphasis in apostolic preaching is the death of Christ. The Apostles preached Christ crucified without note or comment. The theological implications contained in the doctrine of the atonement

¹ Browning, *Bishop Blougram's Apology*.

² Forsyth, *The Cruciality of the Cross*, pages 49-50.

come later. The cross, of course, soon demanded interpretation and the amazingly appealing rationale of the cross took form quite early. The earliest statements, however, were bare statements of fact. "Him ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life." "Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom ye crucified." "Whom ye slew, hanging him on a tree." "Yet asked they of Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all things that were written of him, they took him down from the tree." That is all. The fact of Christ's death is stated with the purpose of pressing home the inescapable guilt of those who accomplished His death. Gradually, however, the meaning and purpose of that death became part of the preaching, and the story of His death gradually enlarged. Scholars have found in the account of the passion, as recorded in Matthew, Mark and Luke, that the events follow the same order and it is highly probable that the passion narrative itself was part of the *kerygma* of the early church. They find in each of the gospels nine episodes. These episodes are the observance of the last supper, the prophecy of the treachery of Judas, the betrayal and arrest in the garden, the trial before the high priest, the trial before Pilate, the crucifixion, the burial, the empty tomb, the resurrection appearances.

The appeal which this factual record makes we well know. It is the most amazing narrative in literature. It works its own miracle upon the human heart. The cross of Christ becomes the place where the love of God meets the sin of man. The crime of the cross was no manifestation of supernatural demonic power but

the outcome of ordinary human sin, common to all men. It was the coming to crisis, as it were, of the timidity and fear of the followers of Jesus, the moral cowardice of Pilate, the closed minds and envy of the high priests, the trivial frivolity of Herod, the avarice of Judas, the tragic indifference of the people. The cross is where salvation and secularism meet and where salvation triumphs. The cross has to do with spiritual wickedness, and its ethical implications are not hard to trace. Paul gave us the key to the understanding of the cross as it relates to ethics. "The love of Christ," he said, "constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died; and he died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again."¹ It is the cross that challenges the ideologies of the dictators. The cross speaks of the infinite value of human life, and the moral tragedy of secularism. "If," as H. Wheeler Robinson has said, "we try to think of the world without Christ we must think of its sinful history as the defeat of God. The grace of the cross is triumphant in cosmic significance over the dishonor of sin to God. . . . This is God's victory, sin is overruled for good in the whole world order as it is in individual Christian experience. . . . The dark wave of sin dashed on the Rock of Ages is made to flash beauty from its myriad elements in the sunlight of divine grace."² With the revival of a new sense of sin there is also a revival of the centrality of the cross in the application of the Gospel to life.

The fourth note in the Gospel music is repeated again and again in the preaching of the early church,

¹ II Corinthians 5: 14-15.

² *The Christian Doctrine of Man*, page 316.

never forgotten, never left out, always recognized, always emphasized, never taken for granted, always proclaimed. It is the fact of the rising again from the dead of our Lord Jesus. There is no preaching that does not include the announcement of this tremendous fact. The resurrection is the corroboration of all that Jesus had claimed in His life and teaching. When the cross was lifted on Calvary there was not one Christian in the whole world. Then came the miracle of the resurrection and suddenly His own people awoke to the significance of who He was. In the mighty power of that great demonstration Jesus of Nazareth was "installed." He was "invested." He was "*declared*" to be the Son of God.¹ The resurrection was "God's solemn Amen" to the tremendous claims which Christ had made. He did make claims. It was because He made claims for Himself that He was crucified. We face the old dilemma, either Christ was raised from the dead or His dust is mingled with the dust of Palestine and His claims are "a series of blasphemous arrogances." James Denny somewhere says that the disciples never remembered Jesus. They did not think of Him as belonging to the past. To them He was a living presence. The frontiers of life became invisible. Eternity interpreted time. Life was transformed. Death was transfigured. The immortal hope awakened men and women to newness of life. It became the trumpet note of apostolic preaching. The resurrection of Christ is either a fact or it is a fable. If it is a fact, it is the greatest fact in history, a fact that has personal, social, and economic implications. It must, if it is a fact, influence education and politics, as well as religion. If it is a fact, all other facts are obscured by

¹ Romans 1:4.

its radiance. Nothing else really matters. Nothing else is worth preaching about.

Finally, in apostolic preaching there sounded the call to repentance. Without this call to action there is no real preaching. These things being so, said the Apostles, what manner of persons ought ye to be? Inasmuch as Jesus has come in corroboration of Old Testament prophecy, since He has lived His life, died His death, and risen again from the dead, *what are you going to do about it?* Jesus comes to men offering them salvation, therefore take heed. Change your mind. Change your mind about God, about Christ, about yourself. This note of judgment is never absent when apostolic preaching is heard, and preaching that carries this note is serious business. F. W. Robertson once said, "I wish I did not hate preaching so much." One wonders what he meant. Perhaps it was for the same reason that Jonah fled to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord when he heard the summons, "Go, preach the preaching that I bid thee." The demand is for decision for or against Christ, therefore preaching is always peremptory. "In all our preaching," says Dr. Jowett, "we must preach for verdicts. We must present our case, we must seek a verdict, and we must ask for immediate execution of the verdict. We are not in the pulpit to please the fancy. We are not there even to inform the mind, or to disturb the emotions, or to sway the judgment. These are only preparatives along the journey. Our ultimate object is to move the will, to set it in another course, to increase its pace, and to make it sing in 'the ways of God's commandments.'"¹

This, then, is the apostolic *kerygma*. It is confined

¹ *The Preacher His Life and Work*, page 172.

to the proclamation of the significance of history in the person and work of Christ. It sets limits to the preacher's message, but the message itself belongs to infinity. The *kerygma* follows a well beaten track, but in the words of John Oman, "there are the rocky steeps of Sinai and the green pastures of Galilee, there are parables by the lake and the sword piercing through the soul on the way to Calvary. Always to be denouncing, always to be pleading, always to be in the depths or in the heights, always to be using the moral whip or always to be supposing that nothing is involved except 'my yoke is easy,' is just to miss the one great thing in life that is worth preaching about, all its height and its depth."¹

Apostolic preaching, therefore, defines and determines for us and for all time what the content of Christian preaching really is. That content has been furnished the preacher. The preacher is a herald. He is neither a philosopher nor a rhetorician. He is an ambassador. In the language of the New Testament he is a *keryx*, a herald. In defining the function of a *keryx* Plato says, "If a herald or an ambassador carry a false message from one city to any other, or bring back a false message from the city to which he is sent, or be proved to have brought back, whether from friends or enemies, in his capacity of herald or ambassador, what they have never said, let him be indicted for having violated, contrary to the law, the commands and duties imposed upon him by Hermes and Zeus, and let there be a penalty fixed, which he shall suffer or pay, if he be convicted."² It is this idea which Paul sets forth under the title of ambassador. "We are ambas-

¹ *Concerning the Ministry*, page 100.

² *The Laws* 941 (Jowett).

sadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God."¹ In the Old Testament the spokesman of the Word of God is called a prophet and the earlier word for the prophet was *seer*. In speaking of Samuel we read, as in parenthesis, "Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he said, Come, and let us go to the seer; for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer."² The prophet was called a seer because he spoke that which he beheld as in a vision. The vision was given him and he imparted it, he heralded it. Ruskin says that the greatest thing a human soul ever does is to see something and tell what he has seen in a plain way. This was the seer's task and this, too, is the task of the prophet. "The prophet," says Dr. James Orr, "saw as God gave him to see, and his answers had reference, not to any or every kind of events, but, as in Saul's case, to those which had a bearing on God's kingdom."³

Indeed, a prophet is one who speaks for another. Jehovah said to Moses, "See, I have made thee as God to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. Thou shalt speak all that I command thee; and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land."⁴ The Apostles, too, were prophets. They were extremely anxious to disclaim any credit for their message. They deliberately shied away from any responsibility for that message. They wished no one to think well of them, to praise them, to applaud them for their services or their sermons. They did not desire to be

¹ II Corinthians 5:20.

³ *Revelation and Inspiration*, page 92.

² I Samuel 9:9.

⁴ Exodus 7:1-2.

thought of as either eloquent or educationally or theologically equipped or endowed with personality sufficient to explain the result of their preaching. We can hardly conceive of them speaking of each other as some modern preachers do. In a religious journal there appeared a cartoon representing a preacher delivering an evangelistic address with the aid of stereopticon pictures. The picture of Christ and His cross was thrown upon the screen, but the preacher was out in front and his shadow fell across the figure of Christ. Underneath the cartoon were written the words "Down In Front Please." The Apostles were always standing down. Paul tells us that he himself "placarded" not himself but Christ crucified. He made people see Christ and the whole New Testament record is full of immediate intensity. "This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses."¹ Witnesses, that is what they wished to be. That is their claim. When the people were perplexed and bewildered by the healing of the lame man their reply was, "This which ye see and hear, *he* hath poured forth."² They wanted people to understand that it was God's doing, not theirs. "Why fasten ye your eyes on us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him to walk?"³ That is the note they struck. "God hath glorified his Servant Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied before the face of Pilate, when he had determined to release him."⁴

The people could not comprehend what was happening about them. They marvelled at what they saw and heard. When ordered to be discreetly silent Peter said, "We cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard."⁵ When they prayed they asked that they

¹ Acts 2: 32. ² Acts 2: 33. ³ Acts 3: 12. ⁴ Acts 3: 13. ⁵ Acts 4: 20.

might be faithful heralds, loyal ambassadors; that they might speak the word with all boldness "while thou stretchest forth thy hand to heal; and that signs and wonders be done through the name of thy holy Servant Jesus."¹ They were commissioned to announce, to proclaim, to make known the Word of God which had been delivered to them.

The preacher who follows in the apostolic succession is consecrated to proclaim a definite, unchanging message. This message is something given, not something discovered. To him comes the message, "Go, preach the preaching that I bid thee."² Apostolic preaching is definite, concrete, substantial, factual, almost formulated, in its method and message. The first sermons of the Christian Church cover the same ground, present the same facts, make the same demands, reach the same conclusions. It was said of T. H. Green, the Neoplatonist who helped to guide many of another generation through the dreary mazes of the evolution period, that "he had fewer truths than other people, but he believed them more intensely." This is true of the apostolic preachers. They believed intensely a few things and they reiterated them, restated them, repeated them; and it is this reiteration, this studied repetition which challenges every true preacher. It is this repetition that makes preaching so tremendously difficult, for the preaching of the Gospel moves in a narrow channel. It must speak always and everywhere the old, old story. The New Testament *kerygma*, which is our standard and our authority, asserts and reasserts, repeats and reiterates a simple and concise message. There is almost a studied monotony about it. The story repeats itself and it is this limitation

¹ Acts 4:30.

² Jonah 3:2.

which tempts preachers to broaden their base and lengthen their line. The minister who has preached to the same people for a generation cannot but wonder why people continue to come for he is saying over again what he has so often said before. It is the old story of Jesus and His love.

Yet this is the art of preaching. "Mastery," said Lord Acton, "is acquired through resolved limitation." The artist is limited to the colors of the spectrum and must work within his limitations. The musician is limited to the notes of the octave and must work out his melodies within the confines of his art. So, too, with the preacher, he works within definite restrictions. This is surely the reason why many are tempted to follow the less difficult path and to wander into other fields. It is easier to preach on current events, on social reform, on economic bewilderment, on Hitler and Stalin, Mussolini and Gandhi, for it requires less originality, less scholarship, less imagination. When the preacher wanders afield from the New Testament tradition it is a sure sign that he is taking the easier path and letting himself down. A recent Sunday announcement carried the sermon topic, "The Invincible Aviator, Par Excellence." The text, too, was given for the public to prepare their hearts for this unique Biblical interpretation . . . "There is none like unto God, O Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heavens for thy help, and in his excellency on the skies."¹ Such a theme is catchy and easy but it is an impertinence and a betrayal. It is terribly easy and that is the tragedy of all such preaching. The people complained that Isaiah, one of the greatest of preachers, was repeating himself, and mimicked him saying, "Whom will he teach knowl-

¹ Deuteronomy 33: 26.

edge? and whom will he make to understand the message? For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little."¹ The prophet replied, "Yes, indeed, for the word of Jehovah shall be unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little; that they may go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken."² It takes time and talent and spade work and imagination, and above all the illuminating gift of the Holy Spirit, to tell over and over again in an interesting way the old old story, precept upon precept, line upon line.

It would be a mistake, however, to produce the impression that preaching, because it moves in a limited area, must be monotonous and colorless. Limitation in terms of the message does not circumscribe the technique of its delivery. The poet, the orator, the musician may all speak the same message. Abraham Lincoln had a very definite, limited message and yet he was one of our first orators, if not the first. His type of eloquence is of the same order as that of Winston Churchill. All along the way lights illumine the path he takes. His language is simple. More than once he said, "I am not a master of language: I have not a fine education." He made grammatical errors. But he knew how to persuade men. His message was clear, limited, unvarying. He came back to it again and again. You can pick it out on almost any page. It had to do with loyalty to the Union, loyalty to the Constitution, loyalty to what was right. To enforce his message he drew upon the little knowledge of history he had, upon current events, upon everyday life, upon

¹ Isaiah 28: 9-10.

² Isaiah 28: 13.

the Bible which he knew thoroughly. A white fire moves through his language, which burned its way through unreceptive and hostile audiences. Because of the intensity of his faith in his message immortal phrases flashed light upon his arguments. He spoke of "the silent artillery of time," "the birthday, promise of liberty," "the ballot is stronger than the bullet." Always the same message, loyalty to the Union, loyalty to the Constitution, loyalty to the right, but always interesting, colorful, alive with human passion and divine conviction.

So, too, with preaching. The message is a given message but it is colored by the personality which becomes its channel. The artist is limited in his colors but the work which he produces is of infinite variety. The musician works amid his limitations but we rejoice in the variety of his masterpieces. Anything may be in the sermon if Christ is in it, and if He is not in it, it matters little what else is there. Critical of a young minister's tendency to introduce unaccustomed material to his bewildered people, the Scotch elder championed his cause, and to his critics said, "It wudna be reasonable tae expect auld-fashioned sermons frae a young man, and I wud coont them barely honest. A'm no denying that he gaes far afield, and taks us tae strange lands when he's on his travels, but ye 'ill acknowledge that he gaithers mony treasures, and he aye comes back tae Christ."¹ That is the true note of the Christian *kerygma*. There is no preaching that can call itself Christian which does not "come back to Christ." Professor Gerhard Kittel, the erudite editor of the *Wörterbuch*, the New Testament Greek Diction-

¹ Ian Maclaren, *Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush*, page 112.

ary, now being edited and published in Germany, says in a recent pamphlet:

“The language of the New Testament has quite definitely but one single purpose, that of expressing that which has taken place, that which God has done in Christ. New Testament words are thus essentially like a mirror; they reflect the fact of Christ. . . . The words and sentences in which the message is framed are formed by men who are imbued with the fact of Christ. They never speak in order to communicate their own wisdom or any theological or philosophical ideas. Nor do they write with any aim of becoming well-known authors of famous books. Their sole purpose is that of handing on a message of a fact with which they are imbued. . . . The bearing witness to this act of God in history is the task of Christianity and of all Christian theology. And the more earnestly we take that into account, the more we shall find that the words and sentences of New Testament language cease to exist for themselves and become, as it were, vessels of transparent crystal which have one sole purpose, that of making their contents visible. . . . In the Old Testament we may frequently read of the Word of God coming to such and such a prophet. In the New Testament . . . the expression ‘Word of God’ is from now on limited to the fact that God has spoken in Jesus.”¹

Thus does Dr. Kittel bear witness to the *kerygma*, the apostolic preaching, the norm and standard of all Christian preaching, and perhaps we cannot do better in concluding this lecture than set over against this word of one of the world’s greatest New Testament scholars the word of one of America’s greatest preachers who for thirty years preached with growing influence and power on the great White Way in the heart

¹ *Lexicographia Sacra* (pamphlet), pages 7, 8, 27.

of New York City. In bringing his ministry to a close Charles E. Jefferson, speaking informally, said:

“People are tired on Sunday. They have seen enough shows through the week. They have had all the entertaining they care for. What they want on the Lord’s Day is a quiet conversation with an earnest-minded man who is interested in the high things of the spirit and who knows how to interpret the words of Jesus and the signs of the times. Declamation is a bore. Oratory is an offence. Fireworks of any sort are an impertinence, but a quiet talk on the deep things of God is always strengthening and healing. A preacher who is content to speak in everyday language to his people Sunday after Sunday about Jesus Christ and the application of Christian ideas to their personal experiences and to the problems of their generation can be interesting and fresh at the end of thirty years.”

Scholarship, as well as experience, attests the fact that the preaching of Christ, past, present, and to come, crucified, risen and ever living, reflects and repeats the true *kerygma* of the New Testament. There may be those who think this preaching is outmoded. There may be others who think it should be supplemented, but no one who seeks to be loyal to the primitive tradition can preach any other Gospel.

II

THE PREACHING OF THE FATHERS

THE Apostolic Fathers are the connecting link between the Apostles and the Apologists. Before we come upon the great names of Clement and Origen, Tertullian and Cyprian, we meet with Polycarp and Ignatius, Clement of Rome and Barnabas, Hermas and Papias, names which have been preserved from oblivion because some fragments of Christian writings bearing their names have come down to us. These men and their now forgotten contemporaries took over from the Apostles the task of propagating the Gospel and formed and fashioned the message and mission of the Christian Church during the first half of the second century. The title "Apostolic Fathers" is vague and misleading but it is not likely to be changed. They were so called because it was believed they were the personal disciples of the Apostles. Professor Kirsopp Lake, in the preface to his translation of the Fathers which is followed in this lecture, says:

"Clement and Hermas are reckoned as disciples of St. Paul, and Polycarp as a disciple of St. John. It is not, however, always possible to maintain this view: Barnabas, to whom one of these writings is ascribed, was not merely a disciple of the Apostles, but belonged to their actual number, and the *Didaché* claims in its title to belong to the circle of 'the Twelve.' It should also be noted that the title does not represent any ancient tradition: there are no traces

of any early collection of 'Apostolic Fathers,' and each of them has a separate literary history."¹

Besides the writings of these recognized Apostolic Fathers there is a perplexing literature included in what is called the New Testament Apocrypha. In his scholarly article on "Apocryphal Literature" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (11th edition) C. H. Charles includes the Apostolic Fathers, some thirty Gospels, seven Acts of the Apostles, and seven Epistles. Many of these are of early origin, many late, and many are of questionable authorship. For the purpose of this lecture the discussion is confined to the writings of the Apostolic Fathers traditionally so named. Of themselves we have very little knowledge and only fragmentary biographical material. They lived in the atmosphere of apostolic memories. They wrote in Greek, read the Old Testament in Greek, and were influenced by the Greek tradition. The Canon of the New Testament had not been formed, but they had access to many of the writings which later were included in the Canon, quoting from them and accepting them as their authoritative guide.

Among the Apostolic Fathers we name Polycarp, the disciple of St. John, a Christian from his youth and a martyr for Christ at the age of eighty-six; Clement of Rome, claimed by the Roman Church as the third pope, appointed and ordained by St. Peter; Ignatius, devoted to church order and ecclesiastical authority, passionately courting and welcoming martyrdom; Barnabas, of whom much is guessed and little known but surely not the companion of St. Paul; Hermas, the author of *The Shepherd*, *The Pilgrim's Progress* of the early

¹ *The Apostolic Fathers*, Vol. I, page vii.

church, replete with visions and similitudes; Papias, the friend of Polycarp and disciple like him of St. John, bearing testimony to the coming Canon of the New Testament; the anonymous author of the epistle to Diognetus who was the recipient of the "short but precious document" which bears his name, a pagan inquirer finding rest in the Christian faith; the unknown author of the *Didaché*—*The Teaching of the Twelve*—the first and simplest manual of Christian faith and life belonging to the close of the first century and discovered in 1883; the author of the writing known as the Second Epistle of Clement, once attributed to Clement of Rome, which is not an epistle but a homily and is the first recorded Christian sermon. The period of the Fathers reaches from the time of the Apostles to the middle of the second century. Polycarp was martyred 155 A.D., Ignatius 107 A.D., Clement of Rome died somewhere near the end of the first century, the Shepherd of Hermas is dated around 142 A.D., and the so-called Second Epistle of Clement some time during the first half of the second century. It will help orient our thinking if we remember that Trajan died in 117, Hadrian in 138, Antoninus Pius in 161, and that in 161 Marcus Aurelius, philosopher and persecutor, ascended the imperial throne.

When we leave the apostolic age, with its creative spiritual dynamic, and enter the period of the Fathers we experience something akin to a chill. We are unprepared for the sudden let-down. The passionate enthusiasm of Peter and Paul and their New Testament companions fades out and we come upon the rather commonplace leadership of men who were good but not great. We miss the divine fire. Their names are immortal and they were great Christians. They were

strong, able men, with open eyes and fearless hearts, ready to die for their faith, but they were intermediaries not creators. This fact has often been noted. In the Introduction to *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* we read, "Disappointment may be the first emotion of the student who comes down from the mountain where he has dwelt in the tabernacles of evangelists and apostles; for these disciples are confessedly inferior to the masters, they speak with the voices of infirm and fallible men and not like the New Testament writers with fiery tongues of the Holy Spirit."¹ Archbishop Whately put the matter into picturesque language. "The Bible," he says, "is not like a city in modern Europe which subsides through suburban gardens and groves and mansions into the open country around, but like an eastern city in the desert from which the traveler passes by a single step into a barren waste."² In his very readable *Lives of the Fathers*³ Farrar passes critical judgment upon these revered names. "We are disappointed—but unreasonably so—" he says, "to find that so much of Clement's Epistle is a mosaic of second-hand phrases." Continuing, he says, "When we turn to the Epistle of Barnabas, we are offended by its curious self-satisfaction in a most weak and untenable 'gnosis.'" We read in Papias the crude chiliastic passage about the vine whose clusters would cry out, "Take me, I am a better cluster." Condescendingly he asks, "Who can resist the simple charm of Hermas . . . a simple-minded, honest man?" However, Farrar adds, "The writings of these sub-Apostolic authors, though they are not works of genius, and possess no great intrinsic or

¹ *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. I. Introduction.

² *Ibid.*

³ Frederic W. Farrar, *Lives of the Fathers*, Vol. I, pages 3-6.

literary value, are of the utmost importance for the early history of Christian life and organization."

These critical opinions, however, do not tally with the view held concerning these writings by the early church itself. Eusebius, the historian, states that the epistles of Barnabas, Clement, Polycarp and the Shepherd of Hermas were read in the churches in public worship and were looked upon as inspired. Furthermore, the Epistle of Clement is incorporated into the *Codex Alexandrinus* and the Epistle of Barnabas and part of The Shepherd of Hermas are bound up with the *Codex Sinaiticus*. This shows that the Christians of that day held them in high honor, and we must be prepared to consider them in the light of contemporary judgment.

However, we should not be surprised that the high level of apostolic preaching and writing is not sustained by the immediate successors of the Apostles. We should be eager to admit the superiority of both New Testament speaking and writing. How could it be otherwise? If revelation and inspiration are facts, then superiority should be not only expected but admitted. The New Testament contains a divine revelation. In it God speaks. Consequently, as Dr. James Orr says, "The New Testament Epistles have only to be compared with the productions of the post-apostolic age, or the canonical with the apocryphal gospels, to see how immense—in the case of the gospels how incredibly great—is the descent."¹ The Fathers themselves, as we shall see later, readily make this acknowledgment and fill their pages with multitudinous quotations and references to apostolic writings. From a human point of view, too, we should not be surprised, for we do not

¹ *Revelation and Inspiration*, page 202.

sustain standards over a long period. Progress is not in a straight line. History and life are keyed to a rhythmic movement. It is a tidal movement with ebb and flow, forward and backward. This, too, has been the story of religion. It has been a record of revival and reversion. The Old Testament itself marks out for us definite epochs of creative life followed by periods of declension. We step across the Christian centuries from revival to revival, from reformation to reformation.

It is so with preaching. Great preaching is not self-sustaining. Even in the life of an individual preacher there are heights and depressions. We must wait for three or more centuries after apostolic preaching for the eloquence of Chrysostom and the Gregorys, Ambrose and Augustine. The long medieval period that followed Augustine reveals an almost total eclipse of preaching. Following the Reformation, the activity of the Deists cast a cloud over the pulpits of Europe, from which they emerged only after the Wesleyan evangelical revival. Even before the New Testament closes, the charge was made against one of the Christian churches in Asia Minor. To the church at Ephesus the risen Lord, walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks, said, "I have this against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love."¹ To a group of ministers Phillips Brooks said, "Beware of losing your enthusiasm." But how can one keep his enthusiasm with the passing of the years? How can a church, a country, a preacher keep the divine fire burning? History, like the landscape, seems to be made up of hills and valleys, heights and depths and long level spaces.

The records we have of this period are meagre, for

¹ Revelation 2:4.

most of the literature and records have been lost. We will never know the names of many faithful witnesses who gave their message and passed into the silence. We know, however, that they kept the light burning and passed the torch undimmed to the hands of their successors, and we know, too, that in their keeping the Gospel triumphed. The period following the apostolic age had its own successes. We will let the age speak for itself. The author of the epistle to Diognetus, writing at the close of the first century, testifies indirectly to the wide diffusion of the Christian faith. He says:

“ Christians are not different from the remainder of mankind, either in country, language, or customs. For neither do they dwell in separate states, nor do they use any special dialect, nor do they practise any unusual mode of living. Being men of busy habits, there is not found in them any special faculty of inventiveness or reflection; neither do they excel in human learning, as do some. Dwelling in cities, Greek or barbarian, according as the lot of each is cast, and following the national customs in dress, food, and the other modes of living, yet they show the constitution of their state wonderful and admittedly marvellous. They live in their own country, but as strangers. They share in all things as citizens, but endure all things as foreigners. Every foreign land is their fatherland, and every fatherland a foreign land. They marry as all men; they beget children, but they do not destroy their children. They sit at a common table, but [not] unclean. They are in the flesh, but they do not live according to the flesh. They dwell upon earth, but are citizens in heaven. They obey the ordained laws, but in their manner of life they live above the laws. They love all men and are persecuted by all men; they are unknown, and yet condemned; they are killed, and are made alive; they are poor, and make many rich; they are in want of all things, and abound in all things; they are dishonoured,

and glory in their dishonour; they are blasphemed and are justified; they are reviled, and they bless; they are slandered, and they pay honour; they do good, and are punished as evil-doers, and being punished they rejoice as being made alive; they are attacked by Jews as aliens, and are persecuted by Greeks; and they who hate them cannot tell the reason of their hatred." ¹

He adds, "It is enough to say that what the soul is in the body, that Christians are in the world. The soul is diffused through all the members of the body, and some Christians through the cities of the world. The soul indeed dwells in the body, but is not of the body; and Christians are known abiding in the world, but their religion abides invisible." ² Writing just after the Apostolic Fathers had finished their course, and passing judgment upon their work, Justin Martyr, who later sealed his testimony in martyrdom, wrote: "There is not a single race of men, whether among barbarians or Greeks, or by whatever name they may be called, of those who live in wagons or are called nomads or of herdsmen living in tents, among whom prayers and thanksgivings are not offered through the name of the crucified Jesus to the Father and Maker of all things." ³

How is this unprecedented success to be interpreted? What were the methods by which the Gospel made its way and got such a wide hearing? Under what conditions was the Word of God so successfully propagated? We will look in vain for great sermons, great preachers, great oratory. While it is true that most of the literature of this period has perished, enough has been preserved to reveal to us the quality of the early church. The only sermon we have is the so-called Second

¹ *The Epistle to Diognetus*, 5.

³ *Dialogue with Trypho*, 117.

² *Ibid.*, 6.

Epistle of Clement, which is a quiet homily presenting the Christian message in simple language. Many writers have sought to account for the victory of Christianity over both paganism and Judaism. Gibbon set forth his celebrated five reasons: the zeal of the early Christians, the belief in future rewards and punishments, the power of miracles, the purity of the moral life of Christians, and the efficiency of church organization. In the Preface to *The Conversion of the Roman Empire* Merivale sets forth four causes: the fulfillment of prophecy, the ability to meet human needs, the purity of Christian lives, the political triumph of Christianity under Constantine. These, however, were the fruit of the Gospel, not its creative cause. We are compelled, indeed, to discover the reason for the success of the Gospel in the Gospel itself. Augustine said that Christ appeared to the men of a decrepit, decaying world so that, while all around them was withering away, they might through Him receive new youthful life. Christ Himself was the life-giver. "The chief positive cause of the rapid spread and ultimate triumph of Christianity," says Schaff, "is to be found in its own absolute intrinsic worth, as the universal religion of salvation, and in the perfect teaching and example of its divine-human Founder, who proves himself to every believing heart a Saviour from sin and a giver of eternal life."¹

There were, however, certain contributing causes for the rapid spread of the Christian faith. The world, in a sense, was prepared for the sowing of the good seed. Imperial Rome kept the peace of the world. The *Pax Romana* ruled from Germany to Africa, from Britain to the Mesopotamian valley. After the long tragedy of war and conquest people were given time to think of

¹ *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. II, page 16.

the things of the spirit. The empire was united, bound together by the law of Rome, by the marvellous network of highways over which the commerce and trade of the world passed and over which the messengers of the Gospel travelled, and by the use of Latin and Greek as universal languages. Intercourse was easy and lands accessible. The letters of Ignatius went by rapid post to their destination as he passed from city to city on his way to martyrdom. Clement sent his message of peace to Corinth. Polycarp wrote his letter to the church at Philippi. The Didaché was known both in the east and the west. Hermas was a familiar name in Alexandria, Carthage and Lyons. Christians travelled everywhere. "What the soul is in the body, Christians are in the world." Under Rome a new civilization was being born, old things were passing away. Harnack quotes Uhlhorn's summing up of the conditions under which Christianity did its work:

"From the time of the emperors onwards a new influence made itself felt, and unless we notice this influence, we cannot understand the first centuries of the early Christian church, we cannot understand its rapid extension and its relatively rapid triumph. . . . Had the stream of new life issuing from Christ encountered ancient life when the latter was still unbroken, it would have recoiled impotent from the shock. But ancient life had by this time begun to break up; its solid foundations had begun to weaken; and, besides, the Christian stream fell in with a previous and cognate current of Jewish opinion."¹

Christianity thus came on the field in the fullness of time. Paganism was breaking up. Everywhere it was

¹*The Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, Vol. I, pages 22-23.

disintegrating. It was undermined not only by Christianity but by Judaism and the religions of the Orient, and emperor worship could not stand up against the new enlightenment. Harnack gives a critical estimate of the situation facing the empire in those early days. We wonder if modern Germany ever opens and reads the pages of Harnack today!

“When Christianity came upon the scene [he says] the polytheism of the State-religion was not yet eradicated, indeed, nor was it eradicated for some time to come; but there were ample forces at hand which were already compassing its ruin. It had survived the critical epoch during which the republic had changed into a dual control and a monarchy; but as for the fresh swarm of religions which were invading and displacing it, polytheism could no more exorcise them with the magic wand of the imperial cultus than it could dissolve them under the rays of a protean cultus of the sun, which sought to bring everything within its sweep. Nevertheless polytheism would still have been destined to a long career, had it not been attacked secretly or openly by the forces of general knowledge, philosophy, and ethics; had it not also been saddled with arrears of mythology which excited ridicule and resentment. Statesmen, poets, and philosophers might disregard all this, since each of these groups devised some method of preserving their continuity with the past. But once the common people realized it, or were made to realize it, the conclusion they drew in such cases was ruthless. The onset against deities feathered and scaly, deities adulterous and infested with vice, and, on the other hand, against idols of wood and stone, formed the most impressive and effective factor in Christian preaching for wide circles, circles which in all ranks of society down to the lowest classes (where indeed they were most numerous) had, owing to experience and circumstances, reached a point at which the burning denunciations of the abomination of idolatry could not fail to arrest them and bring them over

to monotheism. The very position of polytheism as the State-religion was in favour of the Christian propaganda.”¹

When we understand this conflict we comprehend the attitude of the empire towards the Christian religion and its policy of persecution. The persecution of Christianity was largely a belated attempt to save the imperial cultus. It was for this reason that the most able of the emperors—Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, Decius, Diocletian—made war upon the Christian Church, while the weakest of the emperors let it alone. The far-seeing statesmen emperors saw the issue clearly and sought to meet it. Their policy of persecution, however, was bound to fail. There was no vitality left in the old religion to meet the challenge of the new, and persecution itself became the soil in which the new faith grew strong. The early Christians spoke with their lives as well as with their lips and martyrdom became the highest form of devotion. Instead of something to be avoided, it was eagerly embraced. Clement of Rome called attention to the noble examples of Peter and Paul, who although they were “the most faithful and righteous pillars of the Church were persecuted, even to the most grievous deaths. . . . To these holy apostles were joined a very great number of others, who, having through envy undergone, in like manner, many pains and torments, have left a glorious example for us.”² In his letter to the Romans Ignatius said:

“I write to all the churches, and signify to them all, that I am willing to die for God, unless you hinder me. I beseech you that you show not an unseasonable good-will

¹ *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, Vol. I, pages 25-26.

² *The First Epistle of St. Clement*, V-VI.

towards me. Suffer me to be food to the wild beasts, by whom I shall attain unto God. For I am the wheat of God; and I shall be ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of Christ. Rather encourage the beasts, that they may become my sepulchre, and may leave nothing of my body; that being dead, I may not be troublesome to any: then shall I be truly the disciple of Jesus Christ.”¹

When Polycarp was given the opportunity to escape, the proconsul said, “Swear by the genius of Cæsar.” Polycarp quietly replied, “Seeing thou art so vainly urgent with me that I should swear, as thou callest it, by the genius of Cæsar, seeming as if thou didst not know what I am; hear me freely professing it to thee, that I am a Christian. But if thou further desirest an account what Christianity is, appoint a day, and thou shalt hear it.”² Instead of being a deterrent to the followers of Christ, hardship, persecution and death were the very food of their souls. It may be that many of them pressed the issue too eagerly and attributed to martyrdom a cleansing power it did not have, but it was their loyalty to the one and only name that staggered their opponents and challenged their generation. They would not compromise. They would not bow down to a god that could be placed in the Roman pantheon and at last they conquered.

Furthermore, the soil for the sowing of the seed was prepared not only by Rome and the breakdown of the imperial religion but by Judaism. If the preparation of paganism was negative, the preparation of Judaism was positive. Apart from Christianity, the religion of the Old Testament is the purest of all world religions.

¹ *To the Romans*, IV.

² *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*, X.

Indeed, Judaism is the vestibule of the temple of the Christian faith. With its teaching concerning one God, holy, invisible, just, and good, it challenged the polytheism of paganism and the crudities of emperor worship. It has been estimated that the population of the empire was approximately sixty millions and that nearly five millions were Jews. They resided in every part of the empire. They had great religious and social influence, and following the New Testament period Judaism experienced an inward revival and became possessed of a passionate missionary zeal. The religion of the Old Testament appealed to thoughtful people when paganism was disintegrating and subject to open ridicule for it possessed a profound philosophy of life which was welcomed by the Greek mind, and its moral standard was incomparably high. The soil of the empire was, therefore, prepared but was not occupied, for Judaism always maintained its racial exclusiveness and failed, as it always will fail, in becoming a faith for all mankind. No religion that raises racial barriers can ever obtain universal allegiance. A convert to Judaism is never a real son of Abraham, and, consequently, when Christianity entered the field the harvest was great, for the Gospel proclaimed that "there can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus."¹ If pagans were the "first race," and Jews the "second race," Christians became the "third race," transcending racial and religious differences.

It would be possible and highly instructive to trace a parallel between the social and religious situation of the second century and our own day. A study of contem-

¹ Galatians 3: 28-29.

porary history would reveal the fact that the modern situation presents something of a parallel to the history of the early church. This is an era in which the soil of political, economic and religious life of nations has been broken up and prepared for a coming harvest. There are those who see the sowing of only dragons' teeth. To them it is a day of clouds and darkness. Thunder is on the horizon. They assert that Christianity has been driven from the field in nations once acclaimed as at least nominally Christian. Ideologies are proclaimed and practised which are the antithesis of the Christian religion. The church seems to be fighting with its back to the wall. As in the days of Trajan, the State claims supremacy over man's worship, and failure to do obeisance to the emperor—whether he be called Emperor, Führer, or Duce—means exile, imprisonment, or death. Indeed, it is questionable whether any other age can show such a record of religious persecution and martyrdom. Professor Macneil Dixon, in his Gifford lectures, says:

“Assassination of rivals, a method of government hoary with age, and not ineffective, is still employed in countries which stand at the head of Western civilisation. ‘Count Borgia,’ wrote a recent historian, Mr. F. S. Oliver, ‘slew his thousands, the Terror its tens of thousands, Lenin his hundreds of thousands,’ and adds the following note—‘Strictly speaking, the statement should be “millions” instead of hundreds of thousands,’ and cites from Sarolea’s *Impressions of Soviet Russia*: “A Russian statistical investigation estimates that the Dictator killed 28 bishops, 1219 priests, 6000 professors and teachers, 9000 doctors, 54,000 officers, 260,000 soldiers, 70,000 policemen, 355,250 intellectuals and professional men, 193,000 workers, 815,000 peasants.”’ That is about 1,750,000 were executed or massacred. In ad-

dition, the same writer seems to be of the opinion that some 18 millions died of famine, a famine that Lenin had it in his power greatly to mitigate, if not altogether to prevent, but which he deliberately allowed to rage. The diminution of the Russian population during the period of his dictatorship would appear to have been about twelve and one-half per cent.”¹

Moreover, the Christian faith today, as in the days of the Apostolic Fathers, is engaged in a contest of ideas. We are again experiencing a struggle between Christ and Antichrist. It is a conflict between the Christian conception of man, life, and destiny, and a materialistic secular view of the world. Once again the secular arm is claiming divine right. “In the face of this dictatorship,” says Karl Barth, “there are only two questions really full of import and significance for the church and these she must answer: Has the perfect kingdom of God under the Lordship of the Messiah Himself, already begun here? Or have we here to do with its dæmonic counterpart, the kingdom of a false ‘Man-God,’ under the lordship of a false Messiah? It is impossible to conceive any way in which the church can withdraw from this question.”² There should be no doubt in the minds of Christian men as to the issues involved. Does man possess inalienable rights? Is he free, or does he owe allegiance to some other man? Is he “destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system,” or is he the heir of immortality, a child of God? Christians know the answers to these questions as did the men and women of the early church. From this point of view, therefore, there can be no question as to the message to be proclaimed from the Christian pulpit. Because the

¹ *The Human Situation*, page 99.

² *The Church and the Political Problem of Our Day*, page 40.

things in which men trusted are falling about their heads they must take refuge in the "things that cannot be shaken." What a day this is in which to proclaim the truth, to champion truth, to live the truth, to preach Him who is the way, the truth and the life! With the failure of our era of enlightenment, the breakdown of our humanitarian-centered religion, we are brought face to face with the tragic sense of life. The challenge becomes critical. Preaching becomes real. It is Christ or Antichrist. It is Christianity or atheism.

What, then, was the preaching which drove pagan gods from their thrones and pagan philosophy from the schools and triumphed over Judaism? We will search in vain among the writings of the Fathers for new theories of government, new economic policies, the program for a new social order. Both government and economics, however, were fundamentally influenced and transformed by the preaching of the second century, but such results were by-products of the proclamation of the supreme and central message of Christianity.

First of all, there was an unwavering loyalty to what we have called the *kerygma* of the New Testament. We know the content of that *kerygma*. Let us again rehearse this content: "The promises made in the Old Testament are fulfilled. The Messiah kin of David has come. He is Jesus of Nazareth who went about doing good and executing mighty works by the power of God, was crucified according to the purpose of God, was raised by God from the dead, is exalted by God and given the name of Lord, will come again for the judgment and restoration of all things. Therefore, all you who hear the message repent and be baptized."¹ Judged by their writings, this was the theme of the

¹ Manson, *A Companion to the Bible*, pages 97-98.

preaching of the Fathers. The Fathers made no new discovery. They followed the well-known story. They took it for granted. They emphasized the same salvation. They heralded the same Saviour. Clement of Rome, in his epistle to the Corinthians, says, "Let us look steadfastly to the blood of Christ, and see how precious His blood is in the sight of God: which, being shed for our salvation, has obtained the grace of repentance for all the world."¹ Again, he says:

"The apostles have preached to us from our Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ from God. Christ therefore was sent by God, the apostles by Christ: so both were orderly sent, according to the will of God. For having received their command, and being thoroughly assured by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and convinced by the Word of God, with the fulness of the Holy Spirit, they went abroad, publishing that the kingdom of God was at hand. And thus, preaching through countries and cities, they appointed the first fruits of their conversions to be bishops and ministers over such as should afterwards believe, having first proved them by the Spirit."²

The so-called *Second Epistle of St. Clement* closes with these words, "To the only God invisible, Father of truth, who sent forth to us the Saviour and Prince of incorruption, by Whom also He made known to us the truth and the heavenly life, to Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen."³

In the introduction to his epistles, Ignatius always sounds the apostolic note. He begins his letter to the Trallians, "Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to the holy church which is at Tralles in Asia, beloved

¹ *The First Epistle of St. Clement*, VII.

² *Ibid.*, XLII.

³ *The Second Epistle of St. Clement*, XX.

of God the Father of Jesus Christ; elect, and worthy of God, having peace through the flesh, and blood, and passion of Jesus Christ, our hope in the resurrection which is by Him.”¹ In his letter to the Romans he speaks of his desire for “the bread of God, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, (of the seed of David; and the drink that I long for) is His blood, which is incorruptible love.”² To Ignatius Christ was everywhere supreme. “To me,” he says, “Jesus Christ is instead of all the uncorrupted monuments in the world, together with those undefiled monuments, His cross, and death, and resurrection, and the faith which is by Him.”³

In the second place, not only was the evangel reiterated, it was also expanded and interpreted. Theology began to take form. Writing to the church at Smyrna, Ignatius says:

“I glorify God, even Jesus Christ, who has given you such wisdom: for I have observed that you are settled in an immovable faith as if you were nailed to the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, both in the flesh and in the spirit, and are confirmed in love through the blood of Christ, being fully persuaded of those things which relate unto our Lord, who truly was of the race of David according to the flesh, but the Son of God according to the will and power of God; truly born of the Virgin, and baptized of John: that so all righteousness might be fulfilled by Him. He was also truly crucified by Pontius Pilate and Herod the tetrarch, being nailed for us in the flesh, by the fruits of which we are saved, even by the most blessed passion, that He might set up a token for all ages, through His resurrection, to all His holy and faith-

¹ *To the Trallians*, I.

² *To the Romans*, VII.

³ *To the Philadelphians*, VIII.

ful servants, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, in one body of His Church.”¹

Likewise, Polycarp in his letter to the Philippians, repeats the same preaching, “ Now the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and He Himself, who is our everlasting high priest, the Son of God, even Jesus Christ, build you up in faith and in truth, and in all meekness and lenity, in patience and long-suffering, in forbearance and chastity; and grant unto you a lot and portion among His saints, and us with you, and to all that are under the heavens who shall believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in His Father, who ‘ raised Him from the dead.’ ”²

Even the *Didaché*, which is devoted to ethics and to presenting the Christian way of life, takes for granted the New Testament faith. The Eucharist prayer is of surpassing interest:

“ ‘ We give thee thanks, our Father, for the life and knowledge which thou didst make known to us through Jesus thy child. To thee be glory for ever. As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains, but was brought together and became one, so let thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into thy kingdom, for thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever.’ ”³

Could there be anything more affecting than the exquisite words of the epistle to Diognetus?—

“ O sweet exchange, O inscrutable working, O un hoped-for blessings. That the iniquity of many should be hidden

¹ *To the Smyrnæans*, I.

² *To the Philippians*, XII.

³ *Didaché*, IX.

in One righteous man, and that the righteousness of One should justify many lawless ones. In the foregoing time, then, He convinced us that our nature could not attain life, but now He revealed the Saviour, able to save even the helpless, by both of which He willed us to trust in His goodness, to regard Him as our Nourisher, Father, Teacher, Counsellor, Physician, Wisdom, Light, Honour, Glory, Strength, and Life, that we should not be anxious about clothing and food.”¹

It will be seen from this fragmentary evidence that the *kerygma* of the New Testament was accepted and that it was demanding interpretation, which in time issued in a Christian theology. This is particularly true of the writings of Ignatius. Something akin to the Apostles' Creed is discovered in his writings. In the epistle to the Ephesians he says, “For our God Jesus Christ was, according to the dispensation of God, conceived in the womb of Mary.”² In the epistle to the Trallians, he says, “Who was of the race of David, of the Virgin Mary; who was truly born, and did eat and drink; was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate; was truly crucified and dead; both those in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, being spectators of it. Who was also truly raised from the dead by His Father, after the manner as He will also raise up us who believe in Him, by Christ Jesus, without whom we have no true life.”³ Great preaching is rooted deep in theology and it was inevitable that the great Catholic creeds should in time come into being. Even the preaching of the love of God brings us face to face with ultimate mystery. “Good preaching,” says John Oman, “like

¹ *The Epistle to Diognetus*, 9.

² *To the Ephesians*, XVIII.

³ *To the Trallians*, IX.

good poetry, does not deal with paradoxes and quirks and quiddities and pretty unexpected turns, but with the unrivalled glory and splendour of God's common world of men and things under God's common but infinitely changing sky of eternal truth."¹ The demand for more theology in preaching has become increasingly articulate. Dr. Bernard Iddings Bell has been campaigning for "More Dogma Please." He quotes the great French preacher Bossuet as saying:

"Any priest who would give from the Altar unblessed bread, instead of the Holy Sacrament, would be guilty of sacrilege. So also any preacher who from the pulpit gives to the faithful, not the word of God, but his own speculations, is guilty of nothing less than sacrilege."

Then he says:

"The modern preacher is more and more compelled by the pressure of public demand, and by the impulses of his own integrity, with definiteness to preach about such things as these: 'Who, what, and where is God? What is man? How can man's life mean anything but unrelieved tragedy in the light of sure and speedy death? What is the meaning of suffering and sorrow? What is free will? What is sin? Who and what is Jesus Christ? What are redemption, justification? What is worship? What is prayer? What is sacrifice? Who and what is the Holy Ghost? What is the Kingdom of God? Do we bring it in, or does God? And if He does it, how does He do it? What is the Church? What is grace? What are the Sacraments? What is the spiritual life? What is judgment? What is Hell? What is Heaven? What must we do to be saved?' Such things as these make up that about which the preacher of to-day is called upon to speak if he is to receive attention from a busy and troubled people."²

¹ *Concerning the Ministry*, page 234.

² *Religion for Living*, pages 149, 155.

The third emphasis in the preaching of the Apostolic Fathers is on Christian ethics, and this emphasis is not only continued but enhanced during the centuries that follow. The ethic, however, is always an inference from the *kerygma*. The teaching is an implication of the Gospel itself. Because God is our Father, Christ our Saviour, the Holy Spirit our sanctifier, therefore Christians are called to "the high calling of God" and at the same time they are empowered to be and to do that which, of themselves, they would be hopelessly unable to accomplish. The recognition given to Christian life and conduct during the entire period of the early church can be explained only by the moral crisis which Christianity created. The conflict between Christianity and paganism came to crisis in the realm of conduct and life. Christian habits were in conflict with pagan customs. The Christian home, Christian marriage, Christian service demanded a break with life as it was lived in the Roman social order. Again and again Paul returned to the conflict created by Christian morality in its contact with paganism. "Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God."¹ This same conflict is revealed in the writing of the Fathers. "There are," says Barnabas, "two ways of doctrine and power; the one of light, the other of darkness. But there is a great deal of difference between these two ways: for over one are appointed the angels

¹ I Corinthians 6: 9-11.

of God, the leaders of the way of light; over the other, the angels of Satan.”¹ Later in his epistle he contrasts what he calls “the way of light” and “the way of darkness.” The way of light is the way of all Christian virtues but the way of darkness

“is crooked, and full of cursing, for it is the way of eternal death, with punishment, in which they that walk meet those things that destroy their own souls. Such are—idolatry, confidence, pride of power, hypocrisy, double-mindedness, adultery, murder, rapine, pride, transgression, deceit, malice, arrogance, witchcraft, covetousness, and the want of the fear of God. In this walk those who are the persecutors of them that are good—haters of truth, lovers of lies; who know not the reward of righteousness, nor cleave to any thing that is good; who administer not righteous judgment to the widow and orphan; who watch for wickedness, and not for the fear of the Lord: from whom gentleness and patience are far off; who love vanity, and follow after rewards; having no compassion upon the poor: nor take any pains for such as are heavy laden and oppressed: ready to evil-speaking, not knowing Him that made them; murderers of children, corrupters of the creature of God, that turn away from the needy, oppress the afflicted; are the advocates of the rich, but unjust judges of the poor; being altogether sinners.”²

Here is a deliverance concerning social progress and the responsibility for a Christian application of doctrine to life which might well be presented to church assemblies for action today. The symbolism of the two ways appears also in the *Didaché*, and it is possible that this symbolism and parable appearing both in *Barnabas* and in the *Didaché* may belong to the same early tradition.

¹ *The Epistle of St. Barnabas*, XVIII.

² *Ibid.*, XX.

This emphasis upon the social and ethical implications of the Gospel is evident also in *The Epistle to Diognetus*. Applying the Christian faith to life and conduct, the author says:

“It is not by exercising lordship over his neighbours, or by desiring to be greater than those that are weaker, or by being rich and oppressing those that are poorer, that happiness comes: nor can any one in these things become an imitator of God; but these things are all foreign to His greatness. But whosoever bears his neighbour's burden; who wherein he abounds is willing to benefit another who is in want; who, whatsoever he has, having received it from God, by supplying it to those that are in need, is as a god of those who receive his gifts: he is an imitator of God.”¹

The ethical implications of the Gospel are seen also in clear outline in many of the prayers contained in the writings of the Fathers. Clement of Rome, in his epistle, sets forth the attitude of the early church to the earthly rulers in a prayer towards the close of his epistle. It reveals a pattern and a loyalty which stops only when it comes in conflict with the sovereignty of God:

“Thou, Lord, hast given to our rulers and governors upon the earth the power of their sovereignty, through Thine exceeding and unutterable might, that we, knowing the glory and honour which is given unto them from Thee, may submit ourselves unto them, in no wise resisting Thy will. Give unto them, Lord, health, peace, oneness of mind, stability, that they may order the government which hath been committed to them of Thee without stumbling. For Thou, O Heavenly Lord, King of the ages, givest glory to the sons of men, and honour and power over the things which are upon

¹ *The Epistle to Diognetus*, X.

the earth. Do Thou, O Lord, direct aright their counsel towards that which is good and well-pleasing in Thy sight, that ordering devoutly in peace and meekness the authority committed to them by Thee, they may obtain Thy mercy. O Thou Only Strong to do these things, and things far more exceeding good among us, we glorify Thee through the High Priest and Surety of our souls, Jesus Christ, through whom be the glory and the majesty unto Thee both now, and from generation to generation, and unto the ages of the ages. Amen." ¹

The presentation of the *kerygma* and the theological and ethical teaching inherent in the Gospel are apparent in all the writings of the Fathers. When, however, we come to study the *method* of the preaching of the Fathers our information is extremely meagre and biographical detail is lacking. We have at least one sermon, the so-called Second Epistle of Clement. This sermon or homily was addressed to the church at Corinth. It was a public utterance. Towards the end of the sermon the author says, "So then, my brethren and sisters, now that ye have heard the words of the God of truth, I read unto you an exhortation that ye may give heed unto the things that have been written, that ye may both save yourselves and him who readeth among you." ² If anyone is eager to follow the example of antiquity he can, from this testimony, take authority for reading sermons and for the formal address of "brethren and sisters," and for preaching not too short a sermon! The sermon is approximately five thousand words in length, taking probably one hour to read, and the purpose of the sermon is to present a true doctrine of the person of Christ, to challenge the hearers to a

¹ *The First Epistle of St. Clement*, LXI.

² *The Second Epistle of St. Clement*, XIX.

pure life and to a belief in the resurrection of the flesh. It begins reverently, as every sermon ought to begin, "Brethren, we ought so to think of Jesus Christ as of God—as of the Judge of the living and the dead: nor should we think any less of our salvation."¹ It ends reverently, "To the only God invisible, Father of truth, who sent forth to us the Saviour and Prince of incorruption, by Whom also He made known to us the truth and the heavenly life, to Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen."²

The sermon is full of the Bible and this is true of the writings of all the Apostolic Fathers. Clement's first epistle contains one hundred and fifty-seven references to the Old Testament and the Apocrypha, and one hundred and fifty-eight to writings now contained in the New Testament. It is interesting to note that he inserts in his writings long Bible passages. He quotes the entire fifty-third chapter of Isaiah and the fifty-first Psalm. Ignatius, on the other hand, rarely quotes directly but has definite references to the epistle to the Ephesians, the epistles to the Corinthians, the Four Gospels, James, the Psalms, Isaiah, and the epistle to the Romans. Barnabas again and again appeals to Scripture. He uses phrases such as these: "For thus saith the Scripture," "As it is written," "As it is written in the prophets," "Hear now what the Scripture saith," "As the Lord saith," "For God hath said," "Therefore the Scripture speaks." There are one hundred Old Testament quotations in his epistles, some of them followed by rather fanciful interpretations. Polycarp's epistle contains six quotations from the Old Testament and sixty-eight from the New Testament.

¹ *The Second Epistle of St. Clement*, I.

² *Ibid.*, XX.

"I trust," he says, "that ye are well exercised in the Holy Scriptures." The Didaché asserts that "where that which pertaineth to the Lord is spoken, there the Lord is." It was the method not only of the Apostles but of the Apostolic Fathers to use the Old Testament as the textbook of illustration and argument. Professor Dodd thus explains the significance of this tendency:

"The New Testament in almost all its parts bears witness to the diligence with which early Christian teachers 'searched the Scriptures' for anticipations of Christ and the Christian era. It is probable that the earliest work of Christian theological research (if it may be called so) was the collection of 'testimonies' or proof passages from the Old Testament, and that some such collection lay before some of the New Testament writers. The proof from prophecy is often to our minds artificial and unconvincing. But it bears witness at once to the Church's sense of a divine purpose in history, and to the consciousness of a unique fulfillment of that purpose in the coming of Christ. The fact that Christian theology from the first developed with constant reference to the Old Testament was of the greatest value in preserving continuity with the religious tradition of Judaism and in placing limits to the tendency to meet Hellenistic thought half-way."¹

Following Kirsopp Lake's edition of *The Apostolic Fathers*, we discover that there are 48 quotations from Genesis, 23 from Exodus, 10 from Leviticus, 19 from Numbers, 32 from Deuteronomy, 9 from Joshua, 5 from Judges, 4 from I Samuel, 2 from I Kings, 2 from II Kings, 3 from II Chronicles, 2 from Esther, 16 from Job, 104 from Psalms, 19 from Proverbs, 2 from Ec-

¹ Manson, *A Companion to the Bible*, page 403.

clesiastes, 65 from Isaiah, 17 from Jeremiah, 10 from Ezekiel, 10 from Daniel, 1 from Hosea, 4 from Joel, 1 from Amos, 1 from Jonah, 4 from Zechariah, 4 from Malachi, 99 from Matthew, 24 from Mark, 32 from Luke, 36 from John, 21 from Acts, 31 from Romans, 45 from I Corinthians, 10 from II Corinthians, 9 from Galatians, 25 from Ephesians, 16 from Philippians, 5 from Colossians, 7 from I Thessalonians, 4 from II Thessalonians, 16 from I Timothy, 11 from II Timothy, 10 from Titus, 27 from Hebrews, 19 from James, 30 from I Peter, 4 from II Peter, 7 from I John, 1 from II John, 1 from Jude, and 7 from Revelation. The most frequent reference is to the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians. The texts quoted most frequently, and in each case four times, are: "He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh truth in his heart,"¹ "All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and they shall glorify thy name,"² "I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with my whole heart; and I will glorify thy name for evermore,"³ "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,"⁴ "As it is written, Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him."⁵

Certain questions come into mind and may remain unanswered. How did they preach? When did they preach? What was their preaching technique? We know that when the Jewish synagogues began to be closed to Christians, buildings for worship made their appearance at the beginning of the second century.

¹ Psalm 15:2.

² Psalm 86:9.

³ Psalm 86:12.

⁴ John 3:5.

⁵ II Corinthians 2:9.

The oldest Christian church was probably at Edessa and was destroyed in 201.

“The Jews [says Harnack] sought to extirpate the Palestinian churches and to silence the Christian missionaries. They hampered every step of Paul’s work among the Gentiles; they cursed Christians and Christ in their synagogues; they stirred up the masses and the authorities in every country against Him; systematically and officially they scattered broadcast horrible charges against the Christians, which played an important part in the persecutions as early as the reign of Trajan; they started calumnies against Jesus; they provided heathen opponents of Christianity with literary ammunition; unless the evidence is misleading, they instigated the Neronian outburst against the Christians; and, as a rule, whenever bloody persecutions are afoot in later days, the Jews are either in the background or the foreground (the synagogues being dubbed by Tertullian ‘*fontes persecutionum*’). By a sort of instinct they felt that Gentile Christianity, though apparently it was no concern of theirs, was their peculiar foe. This course of action on the part of the Jews was inevitable. They merely accelerated a process which implied the complete liberation of the new religion from the old, and which prevented Judaism from solving the problem which she had already faced, the problem of her metamorphosis into a religion for the world. In this sense there was something satisfactory about the Jewish opposition. It helped both religions to make the mutual breach complete, whilst it also deepened in the minds of Gentile Christians—at a time when this still needed to be deepened—the assurance that their religion did represent a new creation, and that they were no mere class of people admitted into some lower rank, but were themselves the new People of God, who had succeeded to the old.”¹

¹ *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, Vol. I, pages 57-59.

It is not to be wondered at that as early as 180 the Christian Church put Judaizing Christians upon the roll of its heretics.

On the other hand, the position of Christianity as an *illicita religio* made the assembling of Christians dangerous. Pliny the Younger wrote his celebrated letter to the Emperor Trajan asking for guidance in dealing with Christians.

“ In the examination of Christians [he said] I have never taken part; therefore I do not know what crime is usually punished or investigated or to what extent. So I have no little uncertainty whether there is any distinction of age, or whether the weaker offenders fare in no respect otherwise than the stronger; whether pardon is granted on repentance, or whether when one has been a Christian there is no gain to him in that he has ceased to be such; whether the mere name, if it is without crimes, or crimes connected with the name are punished. Meanwhile, I have taken this course with those who were accused before me as Christians: I have asked them whether they were Christians. Those who confessed I asked a second and a third time, threatening punishment. Those who persisted I ordered led away to execution. For I did not doubt that, whatever it was they admitted, obstinacy and unbending perversity certainly deserve to be punished.”¹

It is in this same letter that he described the worship of the early Christians. “ They had been accustomed,” he says, “ to assemble on a fixed day before daylight and sing by turns (*i. e.*, antiphonally) a hymn to a Christ as a god; and that they bound themselves with an oath, not for any crime, but to commit neither theft, nor robbery, nor adultery, not to break their word and

¹ *Epistulæ*, X, 96.

not to deny a deposit when demanded; after these things were done, it was their custom to depart and meet together again to take food, but ordinary and harmless food.”¹ Trajan’s reply to Pliny shows clearly the danger which faced Christians who met together for worship.

“You have followed, my dear Secundus [he says] the proper course of procedure in examining the cases of those who were accused to you as Christians. For, indeed, nothing can be laid down as a general law which contains anything like a definite rule of action. They are not to be sought out. If they are accused and convicted, they are to be punished, yet on this condition, that he who denies that he is a Christian and makes the fact evident by an act, that is, by worshipping our gods, shall obtain pardon on his repentance, however much suspected as to the past. Papers, however, which are presented anonymously ought not to be admitted in any accusation.”²

Preaching, therefore, must have been very unobtrusive, occasional, and informal. In writing to the church at Corinth, which was in difficulty, Clement of Rome makes this interesting comment: “So likewise our apostles knew, by our Lord Jesus Christ, that there should contentions arise upon account of the ministry. And, therefore, having a perfect foreknowledge of this, they appointed persons, as we have before said, and then gave direction, how, when they should die, other chosen and approved men should succeed in their ministry.”³ He does not interpret what he means by “other approved men,” and into the question of bishops and presbyters it is not necessary here to enter. There

¹ *Epistulae*, X, 96.

² *Ibid.*, X, 97.

³ *The First Epistle of St. Clement*, XLIV.

can be no hard and fast doctrine concerning orders in the primitive church. Everything was formative, and different procedures were followed in different localities. The early church was, as Canon Streeter says, "favourable to experiment." "There is," he says, "no one form of church Order which alone is primitive, and which therefore alone possesses the sanction of Apostolic precedent."¹ There was nothing authoritative except the Gospel itself. Unquestionably preaching was informal as church organization was. The proclamation of the Gospel was like the sowing of the seed; some fell by the wayside, some on stony places, some among thorns, some on good ground. Sometimes the seed was sown in an individual heart, sometimes in a group.

"The most numerous and successful missionaries of the Christian religion [says Harnack] were not the regular teachers but Christians themselves, in virtue of their loyalty and courage. How little we hear of the former and their results! How much we hear of the effects produced by the latter! Above all, every confessor and martyr was a missionary; he not merely confirmed the faith of those who were already won, but also enlisted new members by his testimony and his death. Over and again this result is noted in the acts of the martyrs, though it would lead us too far afield to recapitulate such tales. While they lay in prison, while they stood before the judge, on the road to execution, and by means of the execution itself, they won people for the faith. . . .

"It was not merely the confessors and martyrs who were missionaries. It was characteristic of this religion that everyone who seriously confessed the faith proved of service to its propaganda. Christians are to 'let their light shine, that pagans may see their good works and glorify the Father in heaven.' If this dominated all their life, and if they lived

¹ *The Primitive Church*, pages 261-262.

according to the precepts of their religion, they could not be hidden at all; by their very mode of living they could not fail to preach their faith plainly and audibly. Then there was the conviction that the day of judgment was at hand, and that they were debtors to the heathen. Furthermore, so far from narrowing Christianity, the exclusiveness of the Gospel was a powerful aid in promoting its mission, owing to the sharp dilemma which is involved. We cannot hesitate to believe that the great mission of Christianity was in reality accomplished by means of informal missionaries.”¹

This was the preaching method of the Fathers and of the early church. In his argument against Celsus, Origen said, “Christians do all in their power to spread the faith all over the world. Some of them accordingly make it the business of their life to wander not only from city to city but from township to township and village to village, in order to gain fresh converts for the Lord.”² There was no professionalism. The doctrine of the “priesthood of believers” was fully recognized. In the church of the New Testament every professing Christian is a priest. Too frequently Christians assume the attitude of onlookers, taking what has been called “a balcony view.” The idea of looking upon the church as a place where worshippers are spectators, recipients only, onlookers and perhaps critics, is foreign to any true idea of early Christian discipleship. Writing to the church in Corinth, a church that tried his patience and almost broke his heart, St. Paul said that life to him as a Christian was like a Roman triumph, and as he writes one can see the pagantry of it all—the aged senators, the oxen garlanded

¹ *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, Vol. I, pages 366-368.

² *Contra Celsum*, III, 9.

for sacrifice, the priests robed in beautiful garments, the four white horses, the chariots, the conqueror, the crown, the wreath of victory, the sceptre, the victorious generals. One can hear the song and shout of victory and out on the fringe of the crowd one can see the slaves with their censers scattering the sweet incense, and St. Paul thinks of the progress of the Christian Church as just such a pageant of triumph. He was one of the slaves out in the crowd scattering the incense. "Thank God," he says, "wherever I go he makes my life a constant pageant of triumph in Christ, diffusing the fragrance of his knowledge everywhere by me."¹ He was out in the world scattering the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ. That was what preaching meant to him. That is what it should mean to every Christian. Dr. Sam Higginbottom is responsible for the statement that the duty of the Church is not to teach preachers how to preach but to teach laymen how to "lay"! In colloquial language that is good Christian doctrine. Every Christian is a preacher.

The very words in the New Testament testify to this fact. The word *diaggello* means to publish abroad, to announce thoroughly: "Go thou and publish abroad the kingdom of God,"² "that my name might be published abroad in all the earth."³ The word *kataggello* has the same meaning: "They proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead,"⁴ "We proclaimed the word of the Lord."⁵ *Euaggelizo* suggests the announcement of glad tidings: "The gospel of the kingdom of God is preached,"⁶ "The gospel which was preached by me."⁷ The word *kerusso* speaks in

¹ II Corinthians 2:14 (Moffatt).

³ Romans 9:17.

⁶ Luke 16:16.

⁴ Acts 4:2.

² Luke 9:60.

⁵ Acts 15:36.

⁷ Galatians 1:11.

louder tones of heralding the message: "After I have preached to others—after I have been a herald to others,"¹ "The gospel which was preached—proclaimed, heralded—in all creation."² These are words of proclamation, announcement. There is also a quieter conversational word, *laleo*, meaning to utter, to talk, to say, to speak: "When I was a child, I spake as a child,"³ "The words that I say unto you I speak not from myself,"⁴ "I was sent to speak unto thee, and to bring thee good tidings."⁵

Preaching at its best is just good speaking. It is "animated, elevated conversation." It is conversation which forgets there is a pulpit. It is speaking, talking, conversing in an interesting way. It is close enough to the congregation to see the faces of the hearers answering back to the message. It is not oratory or rhetoric, but it is eloquence at its best. It was the method of Jesus. Much of His teaching was table talk. He asked questions and sometimes waited for the answers. We have the extended record of one of His sermons, the Sermon on the Mount, and it contains many questions: "If the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted?" "If ye love them that love you, what reward have ye?" "Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they?" "Which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life?" "If God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" "How wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me

¹ I Corinthians 9: 27.

³ I Corinthians 13: 11.

⁴ John 14: 10.

² Colossians 1: 23.

⁵ Luke 1: 19.

cast out the mote out of thine eye; and lo, the beam is in thine own eye?" "What man is there of you, who, if his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone?" "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works?" It was this Socratic method that arrested and sustained attention and this method has been followed by the great preachers. It has not always been followed but it is the secret of true eloquence. It is direct. It is simple. It is arresting and is in touch with reality.

Perhaps the greatest orator of our day is Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister. In seeking to analyze his art, Robert P. Post says, "In the House of Commons Mr. Churchill stands alone, not only because of his position there but because of his command of the sort of language the House likes to hear. Indeed, the whole country likes to hear it. The people of Britain say, in effect, 'Wait for Winston on Tuesday. He'll tell us.'"¹ And he does tell them. That is exactly what he does. He does not narrate. He does not declaim. Hitler declaims. Churchill talks. His language is simple, direct, understandable. Speaking in appreciation of the British airmen, he said, "Never in the field of conflict was so much owed by so many to so few." There we have an unforgettable sentence that seems to have been struck off as in a flash but must have been long studied. Such study is well worth

¹ *New York Times Magazine*, September 8, 1940.

while, and it is this hidden art in language which makes eloquence. Speaking of Hitler, Mr. Churchill said, "What he has done is to kindle a fire in British hearts here and all over the world which will glow long after all traces of the conflagration he has caused in London have been removed. He has lighted a fire which will burn with a steady and consuming flame until the last vestiges of Nazi tyranny have been burnt out of Europe and until the old world and the new can join hands to rebuild the temples of man's freedom and man's honor upon foundations which will not soon or easily be overthrown."¹ That is the English language at its best. It is direct, alive, realistic. It awakens the mind and releases the emotions. It is an art to be cultivated. If a young man wishes to learn this art of simple direct conversational address let him keep out of the pulpit until he learns it. Let him stand on a level with his hearers and talk with them face to face, as a man talks with his friend. Standing where they stand, on their level, face to face with them, where he can see them looking down their noses at him, where they can by the response seen in their faces answer him back, so that when he is finished he can be brought before the bar of personal inquiry, he will learn to avoid all false oratory and talk home to the hearts of people.

The Hebrew prophets were preachers after this order. We hold our breath as we hear the great evangelical prophet asking his questions about God, "To whom then will ye liken God? Or what likeness will ye compare unto Him? Have ye not known? Have ye not heard?" The preacher of the second epistle of Clement knew this high art. He is on good terms with his hearers. Over and over again he makes himself one

¹ *New York Times*, September 12, 1940.

with his hearers: "Let us confess him." "Let us therefore repent." "Let us practise righteousness." "Let us believe." "Let us therefore contend with all earnestness." He is not up in a pulpit. He is speaking face to face and is preaching to himself as well as to the people. It was this high art that characterized the pure style and exalted thought of John Henry Newman. His sermons reflect something of the Apostolic Fathers. They are interwoven with Scripture in a marvelous way. They quote Scripture. They interpret Scripture and while they were read, they read as if they were spoken. He is speaking of the Invisible Presence of Christ. Sacramentarian as he was, he nevertheless knew the reality of that Presence.

"What [he asks] are signs and tokens of any kind whatever, but the way *to* Christ? What need of *them*, should it so be, through His mercy, that we have found Him? Who asks his way when he has got to his destination? Why seek the shadow, if we already have the substance? Why seek Him elsewhere, if we have reason to trust we have found Him here? Why turn from Him, if we are already in His Presence? If so be we have 'tasted that the Lord is gracious,' what need we more? When the women met Christ after His resurrection, 'they came and held Him by the feet and worshipped Him.' Magdalen would have done the like, but He forbade it. The two disciples, when 'He made as though He would have gone farther,' 'constrained Him.' When Jacob wrestled with the angel, he would not refrain even at his word, but said, 'I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.' 'I held him, and would not let him go,' says the bride, 'until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.' What want we *more* than His Presence? Andrew 'findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have *found* the Messias.' What can we need beyond finding Him? Can

we gain more than Him anywhere? Shall we be thankful, shall we be dutiful, shall we be believing, if we leave Him? The holy women would not let Him go; can we be certain, if we once loose our hold of Him, that we shall ever regain it? Shall we not rather, in that case, be of the number of those, who, though they saw His mighty works, came to Him, and 'besought him that he would depart out of their coasts' ?" ¹

It is all personal, direct, simple, face to face.

One thing more. The sense of community life is apparent in the teaching of the Fathers. They speak not of themselves nor for themselves. They speak in the name of the community, the *koinonia*, the church. They feel in some mysterious way to be in an apostolic succession. Sometimes, as in Ignatius, there is an attempt to formulate that feeling. "The bishop," says Ignatius, "is the center of the individual church as Jesus Christ is the center of the Universal Church."² That, however, is not the uniform testimony of the Fathers and it is not the point of view of the New Testament. "Wherever we find the word of God purely preached and heard," says John Calvin, "and the sacraments administered according to the institution of Christ, there, it is not to be doubted, is a church of God."³ It is this conception of community life that we see emerging, and in it the Fathers found a sense of authority. They were conscious that they were joined in a deathless devotion with apostles, saints, and martyrs, and with Jesus Christ, the secret and source of their faith and fellowship. They knew that if they fell others would stand fast, if they faltered others

¹ *Sermons Bearing on Subjects of the Day*, pages 319-320.

² *Epistle to Smyrna*, 8.

³ *The Institutes*, IV. i. 9.

would march on, if death came others would live, if their word was silenced others would continue the story. This same sense of authority rooted in the community is taking on new meaning in our day. No Christian preacher stands alone. He is in a succession, unbroken and unbreakable. He speaks in the name of the Church, which is the body of Christ. This sense of solidarity, of spiritual kinship, of ethical fellowship, gives to the preacher dignity, freedom and authority.

In the same direct personal style already referred to, Cardinal Newman says:

“Has there not, in fact, been a great corporation, or continuous body politic, all over the world, from the Apostles’ days to our own, bearing the name of Church—one, and one only? Has it not spread in spite of all opposition, and maintained itself marvellously against the power of the world? Has it not ever taken the cause of the poor and friendless against the great and proud? Has it not succeeded by the use of weapons, not earthly and carnal, but by righteousness and mercy, as we foretold? Has it not broken in pieces numberless kingdoms and conquerors which opposed it, and risen again, and flourished more than before, after the most hopeless reverses? Has it not ever been at war with the spirit of the world, with pride, and luxury, and cruelty, and tyranny, and profaneness? Let us, then, glorify our Lord and Saviour for what He has said, what He has done.”¹

Believing in the radiant reality of the Christian Church, let us as heralds of the *kerygma* go forth, “preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness.”²

¹ *Sermons Bearing on Subjects of the Day*, pages 235–236.

² Acts 28: 30.

III

THE PREACHING OF THE GREEK APOLOGISTS

THE Apostolic Fathers were followed by the Christian Apologists. The Greek word *apologia* means a speech in defense of a fact that is true, or against a statement which is false. Plato in his *Apology* defended Socrates against the charges which ultimately led to his condemnation. St. Paul used the word in speaking of the Philippians as partakers with him "in the apology and confirmation of the gospel." The Gospel of St. John is often spoken of as a Christian apology defending the position that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." From this point of view it is easy to see how closely related apologetics is to preaching. There are eras such as ours when Christianity is under attack, when anti-Christian forces are demanding recognition, when faith needs to be reassured and confirmed. The early church experienced such a time. "Preach the word," said Paul to Timothy, "be urgent in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort."¹ In like manner, the first epistle of Peter admonished Christians to be "ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you."² Today the better part of preaching partakes of the nature of an apology and for this reason the study of the Greek and Latin Apologists is to be commended.

¹ II Timothy 4:2.

² I Peter 3:15.

The antagonism to Christianity and the Christian Church which is reflected in the New Testament rapidly gained momentum. The Gospel came to grips with emperor worship and the battle had to be fought out. It was a bitter struggle. During this prolonged period of opposition and persecution we meet with the names of the great Apologists: Justin, philosopher and martyr; Irenæus, theologian and ecclesiastic; Clement of Alexandria and Origen, preachers and exegetes; Tertullian, impassioned and implacable; Cyprian, martyr and ecclesiastic. Other lesser known names come into the record. They, also, were champions of the faith: Quadratus and Aristides, Tatian of Assyria, Athenagoras of Athens, Theophilus of Antioch, Melito of Sardis, Hegesippus and Dionysius of Corinth, Caius of Rome; Hippolytus, competent and voluminous. These and others, known and unknown, flourished. Schaff sums up their work in these words:

“ They refuted the charges and slanders of Jews and Gentiles, vindicated the truths of the Gospel, and attacked the errors and vices of idolatry. They were men of more learning and culture than the Apostolic Fathers. They were mostly philosophers and rhetoricians, who embraced Christianity in mature age after earnest investigation, and found peace in it for mind and heart.”¹

Our interest in the Apologists is practical, not academic. We are concerned with their method and their message. We would learn the secret of their art of defense and attack, for they broke ground for all those who are set for the defense of the Gospel. They traversed the same ground which must be trod by all who would “prove all things.” Their message is re-

¹ *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. II, page 708.

produced in every age, for the charges brought against Christians and Christianity are repeated from century to century. The arguments they brought forth are age-old and were presented by men of intellectual honesty and exceptional ability. The names of the antagonists of Christianity change but the arguments used are repeated over and over again. The first critics of the Gospel were neither fools nor knaves, and it will be well for us to master the art of the Apologists of the early church who succeeded in "outthinking, outliving and outdying" their generation. From the fiery conflict, Christianity came forth more confident, more sure of itself and better equipped for its task in the world.

The opposition which Christians met and which they overcame had its origin first in the emperor worship, which was looked upon as the corner stone of Roman civilization; and second in the heretical groups, which claimed to interpret Christianity in the light of Oriental cults and Greek philosophy and which involved Christianity in rationalism and mysticism. It was an attack from without and from within and was met differently by the Greek and by the Latin Apologists. The Greek Apologists were pre-eminently philosophers. They were speculative thinkers dealing with the implications of Christianity as they were related to current systems of thought and to Greek philosophy. They were influenced by Plato and the Greek idea of the Logos. The Latin Apologists, on the other hand, were practical, interested in man and his salvation, taking a position of violent opposition to all systems of philosophy. The Greek Apologists were thinkers. The Latin Apologists were interested in building up the Church as the body of Christ.

The outstanding antagonist of Christianity among the Greeks was Celsus. His treatise entitled *The True Discourse* has been preserved for us in the writings of Origen, who reproduced most of it in his treatise *Contra Celsum*. We know little about this early antagonist of the Christian faith. Eusebius calls him "the Epicurean," but gives us no information concerning him. We know that he was an able and forthright critic. He knew Christianity and its literature. Writing probably in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, he was no jeering, backbiting, unscrupulous antagonist. He fought a fair fight. He was a Roman interested in Roman law, Roman culture, Roman religion, passionately patriotic, and wrote from that point of view. Had he been able, he would have made peace with Christianity, and was willing to put Christ among the gods in the Roman pantheon. He was opposed to the exclusive claims of Christianity and consequently opposed those claims, contending always for the Roman ideology.

Celsus postulated his argument upon the thesis that Christians were credulous, refusing to examine critically their own religion. They could neither defend it nor confirm it. "Certain of them," he says, "do not wish either to give or to receive reasons for those things to which they hold, saying, 'Do not examine, only believe and your faith will save you!'"¹ He cast discredit upon the miracles of Jesus, not explaining them away but interpreting them by an appeal to magic so prevalent in his day. "Jesus," he says, "having been brought up secretly and having served for hire in Egypt, and then coming to the knowledge of certain miraculous powers, returned from thence, and by means of those powers proclaimed himself a god."²

¹ *Contra Celsum*, I, 9.

² *Ibid.*, I, 38.

The resurrection, he held, was not only logically impossible but historically untrue. "The point to be considered," he says, "is, whether any one who was really dead ever rose with a veritable body. . . . Who saw this? A frantic woman, as you state, and, if any other, perhaps one of those who were engaged in the same delusion, who, owing to a peculiar state of mind, had either dreamed so, or with a wandering fancy had imagined things in accordance with his own wishes, which has happened in the case of very many; or, which is most probable, there was some one who desired to impress the others with this portent, and by such a falsehood to furnish an occasion to other jugglers."¹ Equally unthinkable is the resurrection of human beings. "What sort of human soul is it," he asks, "that would still long for a body gone to corruption? For this reason, also, this opinion of yours is not shared by some of the Christians, and they pronounce it exceedingly vile and loathsome and impossible; for what kind of body is that which, after being completely corrupted, can return to its original nature, and to that self-same first condition which is left? Having nothing to reply, they betake themselves to a most absurd refuge—that all things are possible to God."² In regard to the resurrection appearances of Jesus he makes this arresting and penetrating remark, "If Jesus desired to show that his power was really divine, he ought to have appeared to those who had ill-treated him, and to him who had condemned him, and to all men universally."³

He made much of the fact that Christians welcomed to their fellowship the rabble, the unworthy, the vicious. It is, of course, a peculiarly Greek touch, for Plato, too, held that it is unworthy to love the unlovely.

¹ *Contra Celsum*, II, 55.

² *Ibid.*, IV, 14.

³ *Ibid.*, II, 63.

“ That I bring no heavier charge than what truth requires [Celsus says] let any one judge from the following. Those who invite to participation in other mysteries make proclamation as follows: ‘ Every one who has clean hands and a prudent tongue; ’ others again thus: ‘ He who is pure from every pollution, and whose soul is conscious of no evil, and who has lived well and justly. ’ Such is the proclamation made by those who promise purification from sins. But let us hear whom the Christians invite. ‘ Whoever, ’ they say, ‘ is a sinner, whoever is devoid of understanding, whoever is a child, ’ and, to speak generally, ‘ Whoever is unfortunate, him will the kingdom of God receive. ’ Do you not call him a sinner, then, who is unjust and a thief and a housebreaker and a poisoner, a committer of sacrilege and a robber of the dead? Whom else would a man invite if he were issuing a proclamation for an assembly of robbers? ”¹

Furthermore, he questioned the whole basis of the moral authority of the Scriptures. He was writing before scholars had made us familiar with the idea of progressive revelation. Shall Christians follow Moses or Christ? he asks. They must choose, for they cannot follow both.

“ If the prophets of the God of the Jews foretold that he who should come was the son of this same God, how could he command them through Moses to gather wealth, to rule, to fill the earth, to put to the sword their enemies from youth up, and to destroy them utterly, which, indeed, he himself did in the eyes of the Jews, as Moses says, threatening them, moreover, that if they did not obey his commands he would treat them as his open enemies; whilst, on the other hand, his son, the man of Nazareth, promulgating laws in opposition to these, declares that no one comes to the Father who is rich or who loves power or seeks after wisdom or glory;

¹ *Contra Celsum*, III, 59.

that men ought to be no more careful in providing food than the ravens; that they were to be in less concern about their raiment than the lilies; that to him who has smitten them once they should offer opportunity to smite again? Is it Moses or Jesus who lies?"¹

The ablest of the critics, Celsus, was not alone in his antagonism to the Christian faith. Lucian of Samosata was able and exceedingly clever, although he lacked the sincerity of Celsus. He assailed Christianity with the barbs of ridicule and satire. To him Christianity was sheer foolishness. It was something to be laughed at. It was not to be entertained by the philosophic mind. Christianity was to him "only one of the many vagaries and follies of mankind; in the miracles, only jugglery; in the belief of immortality, an empty dream; and in the contempt of death and the brotherly love of the Christians, to which he was constrained to testify, a silly enthusiasm."² To him Jesus was an "enchanter," "a crucified sophist." Of the followers of Christ he says:

"These poor men have persuaded themselves that they are going to be immortal and live forever; they both despise death and voluntarily devote themselves to it; at least most of them do so. Moreover, their law-giver persuaded them that they were all brethren, and that when once they come out and reject the Greek gods, they should then worship that crucified sophist and live according to his laws. Therefore they despise all things and hold everything in common, having received such ideas from others, without any sufficient basis for their faith. If, then, any impostor or trickster who knows how to manage things came among them, he soon grew rich, imposing on these foolish folk."³

¹ *Contra Celsum*, VII, 18.

² Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. II, page 94.

³ *The Death of Peregrinus*, XIII.

Similar arguments are presented in the writings of Minucius Felix, whose dialogue *Octavius* preserves for us certain attacks on Christianity. "Is it not lamentable," he says, "that men of a reprobate, unlawful, and dangerous faction should rage against the gods? From the lowest dregs, the more ignorant and women, credulous and yielding on account of the heedlessness of their sex, gathered and established a vast and wicked conspiracy, bound together by nightly meetings and solemn feasts and inhuman meats—not by any sacred rites, but by such as require expiation. It is a people skulking and shunning the light; in public silent, but in corners loquacious. They despise the temples as charnel houses; they reject the gods; they deride sacred things."¹ Continuing, he says:

"Why do they endeavor with such pains to conceal and cloak whatever they worship, since honorable things always rejoice in publicity, but crimes are kept secret? Why have they no altars, no temples, no acknowledged images? Why do they never speak openly, never congregate freely, unless it be for the reason that what they adore and conceal is either worthy of punishment or is something to be ashamed of? Moreover, whence or who is he, or where is the one God, solitary and desolate, whom no free people, no kingdoms, and not even Roman superstition have known? The sole, miserable nationality of the Jews worshipped one God, and one peculiar to itself; but they worshipped him openly, with temples, with altars, with victims, and with ceremonies; and he has so little force or power that he is enslaved together with his own special nation to the Roman deities. But the Christians, moreover, what wonders, what monstrosities, do they feign, that he who is their God, whom they can neither show nor see, inquires diligently into the conduct of all, the acts of all, and even into their words and secret thoughts."²

¹ *Octavius*, VIII, 8.

² *Ibid.*, VIII, 10: 3-10.

These were the charges brought against the new religion. They were not dressed up in irenic language. The critics of that day spoke plain, blunt words, whose meaning could not be misunderstood even by the masses. It was anti-Christian propaganda at its worst.

Moreover, antagonism to Christianity came not only from pagan critics but from Christian heretics who claimed the right to interpret the faith for themselves. Heresy rode in the open. Those were days when the canon of Scripture was not yet formulated. The standards of faith and life were still in the making. There was no system or standard of interpretation and the Greek mind was speculative, metaphysical, explorative. The New Testament itself speaks clearly of suspicious interpreters who were presenting in the name of the Church a false "gnosis." Writing to Timothy, Paul says, "O Timothy, guard that which is committed unto thee, turning away from the profane babblings and oppositions of the *knowledge* which is falsely so called; which some professing have erred concerning the faith."¹ The word "knowledge" is the word "gnosis," from which the word "gnosticism" comes. Such gnosis was looked upon by St. Paul as "a puerile and profitless intellectual subtlety, as opposed to the practical moral character of Christianity."² Elsewhere Paul says "knowledge puffeth up, but love buildeth up."³ In time the word gnosticism was used to include all the manifold heretical views that denied the Christian interpretation of the person and work of Christ as set forth in the Creed of Nicea. The word was in use even before the Christian era. Indeed, the movement

¹ I Timothy 6: 20-21.

² *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, Vol. IV, page 150.

³ I Corinthians 8: 1.

had reached its zenith when Christianity appeared. It received its impetus from Oriental sources and was founded upon a dualism of light and darkness, good and evil, God and the devil. It was easy for it to make use of Christian ideas as well as Greek thought. In this way it obtained a renewal of life. Sometimes it approached the orthodox Christian position and many Christians adopted its interpretations in whole or in part. Furthermore, since it made its appeal to the intellectual classes it had a social flare and select groups adhering to the gnostic position flourished. They had rites and ceremonies and their ritual of initiation followed the esoteric methods of the mystery religions and sometimes Greek mythology mingled in its teaching. Schaff calls gnosticism the "rationalism of the ancient church." The Gnostics, he says, "regarded Christianity as consisting essentially in a higher knowledge; fancied themselves the sole possessors of an esoteric, philosophical religion, which made them genuine, spiritual men, and looked down with contempt upon the mere men of the soul and of the body. They constituted the intellectual aristocracy, a higher caste in the church. They, moreover, adulterated Christianity with sundry elements entirely foreign, and thus quite obscured the true essence of the Gospel."¹ They were philosophers and discussed the deepest questions of life: the origin of evil, the relation of matter and spirit, body and soul; the creation of the world, the person of Christ.

It is impossible and quite unnecessary to follow the gnostic heresy as it affected the early church. It had many ramifications and many forms. Eusebius says,

¹ Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. II, pages 445-446.

“One new heresy arose after another, and the former ones always passed away, and now at one time, now at another, now in one way, now in other ways, were lost in ideas of various kinds and various forms.”¹ He quotes Hegesippus as saying:

“They called the church a virgin, for it was not yet corrupted by vain discourses. But Thebuthis, because he was not made bishop, began to corrupt it. He also was sprung from the seven sects among the people, like Simon, from whom came the Simonians, and Cleobius, from whom came the Cleobians, and Dositheus, from whom came the Dositheans, and Gorthæus, from whom came the Goratheni, and Masbotheus, from whom came the Masbothæans. From them sprang the Menandrianists, and Marcionists, and Carpocratians, and Valentinians, and Basilidians, and Saturnilians. Each introduced privately and separately his own peculiar opinion. From them came false Christs, false prophets, false apostles, who divided the unity of the church by corrupt doctrines uttered against God and against his Christ.”²

A popular but most illuminating account of the heresies prevalent in the early church is given with great vividness in Merejkowski's *The Death of the Gods*. He pictures Julian, the Emperor, calling an ecclesiastical council in order to confound the Christians through their own internal dissensions. Merejkowski says:

“He [Julian] had announced to his amazed friends, that, instead of all oppressions and persecutions, it was his wish to give the Galileans full freedom in their profession of faith, to recall from exile the Donatists, Semi-Arians, Marcionites, Montanists, Cecilians, and other heretics, exiled through the decrees of councils held during the reigns of Constantine and Constantius. He was convinced that there

¹ *Eusebius* IV, 7.

² *Ibid.*, IV, 22.

was no better means of bringing the Christians to their downfall. 'Ye shall see, my friends,' said the Emperor, 'when they all return to their former places, there shall blaze up such dissension among these philadelphians that they shall tear each other to pieces like feral beasts, and shall give over to ignominy the name of their Teacher, far quicker than I could attain that end through the cruelest persecutions!'"¹

Against the assaults of the enemy without and the enemy within, against paganism and heresy, the apologetic preachers and writers of the second and third centuries girded for battle. Holding the traditional *kerygma* of the Apostles, they strove to maintain and propagate the faith. While it is true that they themselves sometimes strayed from the true faith, yet they sought eagerly to find the truth, and were ready to die for it, as did both Justin and Cyprian. How, then, did they propagate their faith? What was their message? What was their preaching method? How did they proceed to answer the opponents of Christianity and what was their apologetic approach?

As in the time of the Fathers, so in the age of the Apologists, preaching was informal and personal. Justin Martyr tells us how he himself was led into the Christian faith. It was not through eloquent preaching but by means of what we now call personal evangelism. The story of his meeting with an old man, a quiet Christian, while wandering afield has often been told. It is told in conversational style in Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho*. The old man led the learned inquirer through the subtleties of the platonic learning and ended by saying, "Pray above all things that the gates of light may be opened to you: for these things cannot be perceived or understood by all, but only by the man

¹ *The Death of the Gods*, page 294.

to whom God and His Christ have imparted wisdom." The Gospel is like leaven. It is pervasive. It passes from life to life. Justin himself followed the same method. Schaff says of him:

"He was an itinerant evangelist or teaching missionary, with no fixed abode and no regular office in the church. There is no trace of his ordination; he was as far as we know a lay preacher, with a commission from the Holy Spirit; yet he accomplished far more for the good of the church than any known bishop or presbyter of his day. 'Every one,' says he, 'who can preach the truth and does not preach it, incurs the judgment of God.' Like Paul, he felt himself a debtor to all men, Jew and Gentile, that he might show them the way of salvation. And, like Aristides, Athenagoras, Tertullian, Heraclas, Gregory Thaumaturgus, he retained his philosopher's cloak, that he might the more readily discourse on the highest themes of thought; and when he appeared in early morning (as he himself tells us), upon a public walk, many came to him with a 'Welcome, philosopher!'"¹

In answer to the charge of Celsus that if all men wished to become Christians the Christians themselves would not desire it, Origen replied:

"That this is false, is evident from this, that Christians do not neglect, as far as they are able, to take care to spread their doctrines throughout the whole world. Some, accordingly, have made it their business to go round about not only through cities, but even villages and country houses, that they may persuade others to become pious worshippers of God. . . . At present, indeed, when because of the multitude of those who have embraced the teaching, not only rich men, but also some persons of rank and delicate and high-born

¹ *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. II, pages 714-715.

ladies, receive the teachers of the Word, there will be some who dare to say that it is for the sake of a little glory that certain assume the office of Christian teachers. In the beginning, when there was much danger, especially to its teachers, this suspicion could have had no place.”¹

In general, the Greek Apologists defended the faith along three lines. First of all, they contended that Christianity was philosophically reasonable and sound. Second, they made the claim that Christianity was rooted in history. It was the fulfillment of history as presented in the Scriptures. Third, they argued that far from Christianity encouraging immorality, it led to purity of life and held before its adherents the highest moral ideal. We will seek to interpret the message of the Apologists in agreement with this outline.

First of all, the Greek Apologists claimed that Christianity was philosophically sound. They entered the arena of Greek thought and contended for intellectual mastery. They had a wide audience. Clement and Origen, the outstanding Greek Apologists, belonged to the catechetical school of Alexandria, which has been called the first Christian theological seminary. The school in Alexandria was not situated in a quiet rural community removed from the highway where the race of men go by, but in a great cosmopolitan area.

“In such a city as Alexandria, [says Farrar] with its museums, its libraries, its lectures, its schools of philosophy, its splendid synagogue, its avowed atheists, its deep-thinking Oriental mystics—the Gospel would have been powerless if it had been unable to produce teachers who were capable of meeting Pagan philosophers and Jewish Philonists and eastern Eclectics on their own ground. Such thinkers would

¹ *Contra Celsum*, III, 9.

refuse their attention to men who could not understand their reasonings, sympathise with their perplexities, refute their fundamental arguments, and meet them in the spirit of Christian courtesy. Different instruments are needed for different ends. Where Clement of Rome might have been useless, Clement of Alexandria became deeply influential. Where a Tertullian would only have aroused contempt and indignation, an Origen won leading pagans to the faith of Christ. From Alexandria came the refutation of Celsus, from Alexandria the defeat of Arius. It was the cradle of Christian theology.”¹

The Alexandrian school was organized around individual teachers. There were no classrooms, no buildings, no equipment, no endowments. The head of the school gave instruction in his own house by means of conversational classes and lectures. The course was three years and no tuition was charged. The lecturer was supported by free gifts from rich students. The curriculum included moral discipline, philosophy, the interpretation of Scripture after the allegorical method inherited from Philo and Greek men of letters. The first head of the school was Pantænus, learned in Greek philosophy and in the allegorical method of interpretation. Eusebius states that he travelled as far as India planting the seeds of the Gospel. He was succeeded by Clement. He, too, was educated in Greek philosophy. Eusebius says of him:

“ He has not only treated extensively of the Divine Scripture, but he also quotes from the Greek writers whenever anything that they have said seems to him profitable. He elucidates the opinions of many, both Greeks and barbarians. He also refutes the false doctrines of the heresiarchs, and

¹ *Lives of the Fathers*, Vol. I, pages 351-352.

besides this, reviews a large portion of history, giving us specimens of very varying learning; with all the rest he mingles the views of philosophers. It is likely that on this account he gave his work the appropriate title of *Stromata*. He makes use also in these works of testimonies from the disputed Scriptures, the so-called Wisdom of Solomon, and of Jesus, the son of Sirach, and the Epistle to the Hebrews, and those of Barnabas, and Clement and Jude. He mentions also Tatian's Discourse to the Greeks, and speaks of Cassianus as the author of a chronological work. He refers to the Jewish authors Philo, Aristobulus, Josephus, Demetrius, and Eupolemus, as showing, all of them, in their works, that Moses and the Jewish race existed before the earliest origin of the Greeks. These books abound also in much other learning."¹

Cyril of Alexandria called Clement "a man admirably learned and skilful, and one that searched to the depths all the learning of the Greeks, with an exactness rarely attained before."² Only a preacher and teacher well versed in the thinking of his generation could have commanded the attention of the learned men who were his contemporaries. Greek thinkers who would have ridiculed the denunciations of Tertullian were compelled to listen to Clement and Origen, for they spoke their language and commanded their respect. Let us listen to the learned language of Clement. He is speaking about the death of paganism:

"Explore not then too curiously the shrines of impiety, or the mouths of caverns full of monstrosity, or the Thesprotian caldron, or the Cirrhæan tripod, or the Dodonian copper. The Gerandryon, once regarded sacred in the midst of desert sands, and the oracle there gone to decay with the oak itself,

¹ *Eusebius* VI, 13.

² *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. II, page 166.

consigned to the region of antiquated fables. The fountain of Castalia is silent, and the other fountain of Colophon; and, in like manner, all the rest of the springs of divination are dead, and stripped of their vainglory.”¹

In like manner Origen, who succeeded Clement, spoke with the same learned accent. Heathen and heretic alike attended his classes. Of himself Origen says, “ ‘When I had wholly devoted myself to the promulgation of the divine doctrines, and the fame of my skill in them began to be spread, and sometimes heretics, sometimes men trained in Greek philosophy came to visit me, I thought it necessary to examine the opinions of heretics and what philosophers pretend to know of the truth.’ ”² According to Eusebius, Origen’s father gave him a liberal education. “Before inducting him into the Greek sciences, he drilled him in sacred studies, requiring him to learn and recite every day. . . . Having been instructed in the sciences of the Greeks by his father, he devoted himself after his death more assiduously and exclusively to the study of literature, so that he obtained considerable preparation in philology and was able not long after the death of his father, by devoting himself to that subject, to earn a compensation amply sufficient for his needs at his age.”³

These men, then, were amply able and qualified to support their claim that Christianity was philosophically sound. Justin Martyr founded his arguments upon the doctrine of the Logos. In his *Apologia* he says:

¹ *Exhortation to the Heathen*, Chapter II.

² Farrar, *Lives of The Fathers*, Vol. I, page 404.

³ Eusebius VI, 2.

“ We have been taught that Christ is the first-born of God, and we have declared above that He is the Word of whom every race of men partake; and those who lived reasonably were Christians, even though they have been thought atheists; as among the Greeks, Socrates and Heraclitus and those like them; and among the Barbarians, Abraham and Ananias, and Azarias, and Misael, and Elias, and many others whose actions and names we now decline to recount, because we know it would be tedious. . . . Our doctrines, then, appear to be greater than all human teaching; because Christ who appeared for our sakes became the whole rational being, body and reason and soul. For whatever either law-givers or philosophers uttered well they elaborated by finding and contemplating some part of the Logos.”¹

Clement contended that philosophy was the Greek schoolmaster leading the Gentile world to Christ. “ Perchance, too, philosophy was given to the Greeks directly till the Lord should call the Greeks also. For this was a schoolmaster to bring the Hellenic mind to Christ, as was the law to bring the Hebrews. Philosophy, therefore, was a preparation, paving the way for him who is perfected in Christ.”² Origen used the same approach:

“ Let no one imagine that we mean anything unsubstantial when we call Him the Wisdom of God; or suppose, for example, that we understand Him to be, not a living being endowed with wisdom, but something which makes men wise, giving itself to, and implanting itself in, the minds of those who are made capable of receiving its virtues and intelligence. If, then, it is once rightly understood that the only begotten Son of God is His Wisdom hypostatically existing, I know not whether our mind ought to advance beyond this or entertain any suspicion that the hypostasis or *substantia* contains

¹ *Apologia*, I, 46 and II, 10.

² *Stromata*, I, 5.

anything of a bodily nature, since everything corporeal is distinguished either by form, or color, or magnitude.”¹

It will be recognized that frequently the philosophical urge often led both Clement and especially Origen into strange bypaths which issued in teaching not in agreement with New Testament standards, but the whole drift of their preaching was an endeavor to commend the Christian faith to the thinking men of their generation. This is still the preacher's task. It is a tragedy when the world outthinks the church and when laymen outread the clergy. In his fascinating book *Concerning the Ministry* John Oman says:

“My heart sinks when I see only homiletical literature and little improving books on a minister's shelves. But for the reasons just given, it does not beat very high when I see nothing save religious books of any kind. And it beats with a still slower pulse when I find, in talking with their owner, that he is mainly interested in ideas theological and affairs ecclesiastical, and that literature means nothing, and that in the whole kindly race of men, with the vital thoughts that move so warmly in their hearts, their varied avocations, and the joys and sorrows of their manifold experiences, he has only a parson's interest, and that he has not enough human contact to have so much as a funny story about one of them.”²

Phillips Brooks issued a similar lament:

“I never shall forget my first experience of a divinity school. I had come from a college where men studied hard but said nothing about faith. I had never been at a prayer meeting in my life. The first place I was taken to at the seminary was the prayer meeting; and never shall I lose the

¹ *De Principiis*, I, 2:2.

² *Concerning the Ministry*, pages 148-149.

impression of the devoutness with which those men prayed and exhorted one another. Their whole souls seemed exalted and their natures were on fire. I sat bewildered and ashamed, and went away depressed. On the next day I met some of those same men at a Greek recitation. It would be little to say of some of the devoutest of them that they had not learnt their lessons. Their whole way showed that they never learnt their lessons; that they had not got hold of the first principles of hard, faithful, conscientious study."¹

It is said that when Luther reached the Castle of Coburg in 1530 he wrote to his friend Melancthon, "We arrived on our Sinai; but we wish to make a Zion of this Sinai and build thereon three tabernacles, one to the Psalms, one to the Prophets, and one to Æsop."²

We live in an age that demands a new and fresh apologetic. On every hand Christianity is attacked. The case against Christianity is gathering increased violence. The philosopher, the scientist, the psychologist, the economist, even the poet, has marshalled anti-Christian evidence, and the answer can be made only by men who know their language and who speak with authority. What has the modern preacher to say to the men who claim that Christianity is outmoded? They are serious-minded, thoughtful men. Abuse will only do harm. Ridicule will only estrange. Only conscientious and laborious thinking will suffice and in this task the Apologists of the early church are not only our examples but also our critics and our judges.

In the second place, the Greek Apologists contended that Christianity was historically true and for their evidence they turned to the Scriptures. Christ came into history "in the fulness of time." They were too near

¹ *Lectures on Preaching*, page 44.

² Stoddard, *The Psalms for Every Day*, page 283.

those world transforming historic events to consider critical examination of the evidence. They accepted the evidence and proceeded to substantiate it. They appealed to the Scriptures of the Old Testament and to the increasing literature that later made up the Canon of the New Testament. They fought their battle with the sword of the Spirit, "which is the Word of God." They made their appeal to the prophecies of the Old Testament and showed how they had been fulfilled in Christ. To those who called themselves Christians, even if they held some form of heresy, the testimony of Scripture was final. In this field of apologetic argument Origen was the master. He was the first great Bible preacher and expositor. He consecrated himself to the task of interpreting the Scripture. From the age of eighteen, when he became head of the catechetical school at Alexandria, to the time of his death at the age of sixty-nine, his devotion never knew doubt nor change. In Alexandria he was always teaching. In Cæsarea he was always preaching. He spoke directly so that a mixed audience could understand him. He had no concordance or cross-reference Bible to help him. His knowledge of the Scriptures and his memory enabled him to gather clusters of the same word and to interpret it. Eusebius is our authority for our knowledge of his early training. He writes:

"He had stored up no small resources in the words of the faith, having been trained in the Divine Scriptures from childhood. And he had not studied them with indifference, for his father, besides giving him the usual liberal education, had made them a matter of no secondary importance. . . . He puzzled his father with inquiries for the true meaning of the inspired Scriptures. And his father rebuked him seemingly to his face, telling him not to search beyond his age,

or further than the manifest meaning. But by himself he rejoiced greatly and thanked God, the author of all good, that he had deemed him worthy to be the father of such a child. And they say that often, standing by the boy when asleep, he uncovered his breast as if the Divine Spirit were enshrined within it, and kissed it reverently; considering himself blessed in his goodly offspring.”¹

We can still hear his commanding voice. Let us imagine he is speaking to theological students.

“Do you then, my son, [he says] diligently apply yourself to the reading of the sacred Scriptures. Apply yourself, I say. For we who read the things of God need much application, lest we should say or think anything too rashly about them. And applying yourself thus to the study of the things of God, with faithful prejudgments such as are well pleasing to God, knock at its locked door, and it will be opened to you by the porter, of whom Jesus says, ‘To him the porter opens.’ And applying yourself thus to the divine study, seek aright, and with unwavering trust in God, the meaning of the holy Scriptures, which so many have missed. Be not satisfied with knocking and seeking; for prayer is of all things indispensable to the knowledge of the things of God. For to this the Saviour exhorted, and said not only, ‘Knock, and it shall be opened to you; and seek, and ye shall find,’ but also, ‘Ask, and it shall be given unto you.’”²

His voice was never silent and his pen was never idle. Jerome tells us that he wrote more books than any human being could read. Epiphanius places the number at six thousand, most of them expositions, homilies and commentaries on the Scripture. He gave to the world the first great critical work, the *Hexapla*, in

¹ *Eusebius* VI, 2: 7-11.

² A Letter from Origen to Gregory.

which he presented the Old Testament text in Hebrew with a Greek transliteration and the Greek versions of the Septuagint, Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotian, all arranged in six parallel columns.

His great and unforgettable service in the field of exegesis often has been obscured by the critical attitude of scholars to the allegorical method of interpretation in use in the Alexandrian school and of which Origen, following Clement, was the master. It is not necessary to give in detail the principles and the conclusions of this system of interpretation which throws into confusion the whole purpose and message of the Scripture. In brief, it was contended that there was a higher and a lower meaning in Scripture. Origen presents the allegorical method in these words, "One ought to portray the ideas of Holy Scripture in a threefold manner upon his soul, in order that the simple man may be edified by the 'flesh,' as it were, of Scripture, for so we name the obvious sense; while he who has ascended a certain way may be edified by the 'soul,' as it were. . . . For as man consists of body and soul and spirit, so in the same way does the Scripture consist, which has been arranged by God for the salvation of men."¹ Sometimes it did give him spiritual insight.

"The same style of Scriptural narrative [he says] occurs abundantly in the Gospels, as when the devil is said to have placed Jesus on a lofty mountain, that he might show Him from thence all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. How could it literally come to pass, either that Jesus should be led up by the devil into a high mountain, or that the latter should show him all the kingdoms of the world (as if they were lying beneath his bodily eyes, and adjacent to one mountain), *i. e.*, the kingdoms of the Persians, and

¹ *De Principiis*, IV, 1: 11.

Scythians, and Indians? Or how could he show in what manner the kings of these kingdoms are glorified by men? And many other instances similar to this will be found in the Gospels by any one who will read them with attention, and will observe that in those narratives which appear to be literally recorded, there are inserted and interwoven things which cannot be admitted historically, but which may be accepted in a spiritual signification.”¹

He was saner than many modern preachers who follow his method. “Let no one,” he says, “entertain the suspicion that we do not believe any history in Scripture to be real, because we suspect certain events related in it not to have taken place; or that no precepts of the law are to be taken literally, because we consider certain of them, in which either the nature or possibility of the case so requires, incapable of being observed; or that we do not believe those predictions which were written of the Saviour to have been fulfilled in a manner palpable to the senses; or that His commandments are not to be literally obeyed. We have therefore to state in answer, since we are manifestly so of opinion, that the truth of the history may and ought to be preserved in the majority of instances.”²

Nevertheless, the works of Origen are full of fanciful interpretations. A brief résumé will suffice:

“Sarah’s laughter was only due to bashfulness, not to credulity; that Lot’s wife was an allegory intended to salt those who have a spiritual understanding; that the three days of Abraham’s journey typify sight, desire, and discernment; that the ‘wine’ in Genesis is a reference to the blood of Christ; that Joseph’s coat of many colours means his

¹ *De Principiis*, IV, 1: 15.

² *Ibid.*, IV, 1: 19.

varied knowledge; that the two tables signify the heaven and the earth; that sun, moon, stars, clouds, light—wind, water, air, darkness, fire—are the heavenly decalogue; that in the verse ‘an omer is the tenth part of the three measures’—for as usual he contents himself with the Septuagint—the ‘three measures’ mean sensation, speech, and mind; that Moses slew the Egyptian with a word; that the rules about unclean meats were meant to teach frugality; that the clean animals which divide the hoof and chew the cud signify the orthodox who steadfastly meditate on the law of God; that Job’s coming ‘naked from his mother’s womb’ meant his freedom from vice; that the barley loaves of the miracle signify the Jew and the Gentile, and the fishes the Greek philosophy.”¹

We must not dismiss this with a shrug of the shoulder. The problem facing Origen, and indeed every expositor of the Scriptures in the early church, was to reconcile the facts of Old Testament Scripture with the faith and ethics of the Gospel. He had no knowledge of what we call progressive or gradual revelation. The Old Testament with its morality was under attack by the Gnostics, and Origen’s purpose was to save it for the Church. To save the whole structure of Scripture as a unity the resort was made to discover beneath all differences a mystical and eternal meaning. Furthermore, the allegorical method was everywhere in common use. It was the method of Philo and was used by the Greeks in the interpretation of their own classic literature. Indeed, “this method,” says Dean Inge, “was no invention of Philo, or of his contemporaries. Greek moralists had long treated Homer in this way, quoting lines from him as we quote verses from the Bible, to enforce moral truths. The system was elaborated by the Sophists, and still more by the school of

¹ Farrar, *Lives of the Fathers*, Vol. I, page 385.

Anaxagoras; but it is rejected by Plato, who will not admit unedifying myths into his State, 'either with or without allegories.'"¹

All Bible expositors are, in a sense, allegorists, for allegory is clearly associated with imagination and without imagination no man can be a Bible preacher and expositor. Allegory has been called "the sacramental method applied to history and literature." In poetry and in the highest imaginative writing we invariably drop into allegory. Jesus Himself said to His disciples, when they asked Him why He spoke in parables, "Because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand."² St. Paul is our authority for the principle that "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."³ He says, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged."⁴ The Westminster Confession of Faith after marshalling the evidences for the incomparable excellencies of the Scripture says that, finally, "our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from *the inward work of the Holy Spirit*, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts."⁵ That is to say, scholarship without spiritual insight is vain.

When, therefore, we speak of Bible preaching we mean preaching which is lighted up by spiritual illumination. The great preachers have been Bible preachers. George Adam Smith's epoch-making books on *Isaiah* and *The Minor Prophets* grew out of his Bible

¹ *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. I, page 310.

² Matthew 13: 13.

³ II Corinthians 3: 6.

⁴ I Corinthians 2: 14.

⁵ Chapter I, Sec. V.

preaching. Matthew Henry's *Commentary*, which has wide circulation after two hundred and thirty years, contains the substance of his pulpit work. One of the greatest series of sermons in the English language is contained in Joseph Parker's *The People's Bible*. Alexander Whyte's books on *Bible Characters* contain his Sunday evening sermons. George Matheson's *Representative Men and Women* contains sermons preached over a series of years. In like manner, Origen's commentaries, including his amazing exposition of the Gospel of John, were all preached. Indeed his Bible preaching set the standard for the Christian Church. He was constantly preaching and constantly interpreting the Word of God. Farrar says:

"Always on Wednesday and Friday, sometimes daily, and sometimes even twice a day, he expounded the Bible popularly to mixed congregations. At first he did not permit these discourses to be reported by shorthand writers, but only published them as written and revised by himself. But after his sixtieth year, when long familiarity with his subject and the practice of constant speaking had given him perfect accuracy and fluency, he allowed his extempore homilies to be taken down. A large portion of his extant homilies consists of these addresses to the Christians of Cæsarea. If modern preachers are sometimes disheartened by careless listeners, it may console them to know that even in the days of Origen a preacher could sometimes only attract a scanty congregation, that women went to a back part of the church to gossip during the sermon, and that some of the listeners were impatient and inattentive."¹

One of Origen's converts from heresy was a wealthy man named Ambrosius. He was devoted to Origen and gave liberally to help the great preacher in his work.

¹ *Lives of the Fathers*, Vol. I, page 418.

Origen calls him his "taskmaster," for he kept him at his task early and late, so eager was he to have him get on with his expositions. Ambrosius paid for seven or more shorthand writers, who were in constant attendance upon Origen taking down his words and as many clerks copying them. Many of the sermon reports are fragmentary and some imperfect, but always the Bible is the quarry where he worked and when he laid down his work he had not finished his task.

True preaching is Bible preaching. It is in a true sense sacramental. It is the breaking of the Bread of Life. That is why the Reformers made so much of preaching. It was not to please an audience or to parade a good man's eloquence. In true preaching, God is speaking. When the weekly observance of the Eucharist was removed from the service at the Reformation the sermon took its place. In the Reformed churches the pulpit is central because, as Dr. P. Carnegie Simpson has said, "It is the throne of the Word of God." What a glorious thing preaching becomes when it is remembered that in it God is speaking! Is there a better definition of preaching than that given by the prophet: "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will look forth to see what he will speak by me" ?¹ From this point of view the sermon becomes a supreme act of worship. Both preacher and hearer alike are listening, and each is saying, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." Therefore, to proclaim that which is not of the Word of God becomes an intolerable impertinence, a breach of decorum in the House of God, an act of irreverent interference, for it comes between the man and his Maker. A preacher who uses a Christian pulpit to make of it a sounding

¹ Habakkuk 2 : 1.

board for the heralding of something other than the Word of God is false to his divine commission. Nevertheless, the Word of God is not bound, and the voice of the Eternal speaks through every event and circumstance of life.

All Bible preaching, however, is not preaching. There is Bible preaching which is dry-as-dust and equally worthless. There is preaching which makes of the Bible a book of mathematics, containing schedules of God's plan for the future; a book of mystery, which must require some key to open the hidden meaning of symbols and numbers; a book of allegories, which may be interpreted according to fancy; a book containing blueprints of dispensations past and present, which only those who have been initiated can understand. Whenever the Bible is studied in the light of the best scholarship, the best interpretation, and when the inward influence of the Holy Spirit has brought insight and understanding, then Bible preaching is possible. As preachers we cannot too often ponder the words of the Master: "Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures."¹ What, then, is Bible preaching?

Joseph Parker is preaching. He is preaching straight through the New Testament. He is finding it hard to get past the Christmas story. The genealogy of Jesus fascinates him. He discovers "that grace is not hereditary." He dwells upon the miracle of the Incarnation and then he returns to it again. He revels in the story of the Wise Men. They seek a Saviour not a star. The Persians saw stars. The Wise Men saw the Saviour. He preaches about Joseph's dream. What is a dream? What does a dream signify? Why has the

¹ Luke 24: 45.

dream been lost to the Church? "We have lost everything—prophecy, tongues, miracles, songs, gifts of healing, helps, governments, enthusiasms, heroisms—we have lost them all! It is just like us—fools, we ought never to have been trusted with anything! What have we left now? Nothing. Miracles gone, prophecy gone, the devil gone, God—GOING."¹ And then he comes to the flight into Egypt and the return, but he cannot get past the verse, "They are dead which sought the young child's life."² That is a fact of history. That took place in the Roman calendar. Some dry-as-dust preacher would begin by saying, "Herod the Great died in 4 B.C." Well, what about it? We are not interested in Herod. We are interested in Hitler. Parker lingers over the verse, "They are DEAD which sought the young child's life." Then he begins to preach:

"That is always the ending of wickedness: that is the history of all the assaults that ever have been made upon Jesus Christ and His kingdom. I have seen great armies of men come up against the young child, and behold they have perished in a night, and in the morning the angels have said to one another, 'They are DEAD which sought the young child's life.' I have seen critics come up with keen eye and sharp knife, and a new apparatus adapted to carry out its processes and purposes of extermination, and behold the critics have cut their own bones and died of their own wounds, and the angels have said, 'They are DEAD that sought the young child's life.' I have seen whole towns of new institutions, created for the purpose of putting down the Christian Church. All kinds of competitive buildings have been put up at a lavish expenditure, the preacher was to be put down, the Bible was to be shut up, the old hymn-singing

¹ *The People's Bible*, Vol. XVIII, page 36.

² Matthew 2:20.

was to be done away with, a new era was to dawn upon the wilderness of time, and, lo, the bankruptcy court had to be enlarged to take in groups of new mendicants, for they DIED that sought the young child's life! No man ever died who sought the young child's saving ministry; no man ever died who went to the young child and said, 'My Saviour, thy grace is greater than my sin, pity me and lift me out of this deep pit by the hand of thy love.' The angels never said about such a one, 'He is dead who offered that prayer.' No dead man is found at the foot of the cross."¹

That is Bible preaching and it is preaching that stirs the intellect, warms the heart, and energizes the will. Bible preaching lays under tribute all knowledge wherever it is found, in history, in science, in literature, anything and everything that will illustrate and illumine and verify the message of the Bible.

The Apologists claimed that Christianity was philosophically sound and historically true. Their third claim was that it was also morally pure. They denied indignantly the oft-repeated allegation of their enemies that Christians practised, either in public or in private, immoral rites. They not only presented unimpeachable evidence of the pure morality that characterized Christian life and conduct but at the same time exposed the flagrant immorality of paganism. Says Clement, "O unblushing shamelessness! Once on a time night was silent, a veil for the pleasure of temperate men; but now for the initiated, the holy night is the tell-tale of the rites of licentiousness; and the glare of torches reveals vicious indulgences."² Speaking in terms of sarcasm he says, "This is Jupiter the good, the prophetic, the patron of hospitality, the pro-

¹ *The People's Bible*, Vol. XVIII, pages 48-49.

² *Exhortation to the Heathen*, Chapter II.

tector of suppliants, the benign, the author of omens, the avenger of wrongs; rather the unjust, the violator of right and of law, the impious, the inhuman, the violent, the seducer, the adulterer, the amatory. But perhaps when he was such he was a man; but now these fables seem to have grown old on our hands."¹

This is apologetics at its best, for the highest apologetic is always discovered in the realm of life and conduct. Clement preached eloquently concerning right living. He spoke about what was done and what ought to be done in regard to eating and drinking; on the use of costly vessels, of table knives studded with silver, of wine coolers, and tables with ivory feet; of feasts with their burlesque singing and their audacious revelry; of laughter which is vulgar and insulting; of filthy speaking which demands salutary ear-guards and regulations for slippery eyes; of ointments and crowns, of women who scatter the fragrance of scented powders and royal perfumes instead of the fragrance of Christ; of sleep that is pure and simple, requiring not embroidered carpets, ivory beds and fine robes of purple; of clothes that avoid both strangeness and extravagance; of shoes without golden ornaments; of jewels and necklaces that required ears to be pierced, the substitute for the chains which God forges; of hair that is colored to conceal age; of painted faces that deceive; of church attendance which should be decorous, men and women being "decently attired, with natural step, embracing silence, possessing unfeigned love, pure in body, pure in heart, fit to pray to God."²

If the early church "out-thought" the pagan world it also "outlived" it, and it is in this same sphere of

¹ *Exhortation to the Heathen*, Chapter II.

² *The Instructor*, III, xi.

life that the ultimate decision will again be made in our day. Can Christians outlive anti-Christians? Can Christians outlive Nazis, Fascists, and Communists, who have turned their backs on the Gospel and put their trust in diplomacy, in dictatorship, in atheism? This is the supreme test. What is the evidence in the realm of character and conduct for the Christian faith? Does it produce a better product in individual, family and national life? What is the evidence for a no-God philosophy of life? Will it work? Has it been a success? Will we exchange life in Russia and Germany for life in the United States and Great Britain?

We are what our admirations are. We become like that which we worship. It is even possible to say with Browning, "What I aspired to be and was not comforts me," and so we return to the life and character of Christ, in whose character they who worship and adore Him are fashioned. The early Apologists kept close to Christ and His life was reflected in theirs. While there were fancies and vagaries mingled with their thinking, the central message was never obscured. One holy passion inspired them. Asked by his opponent to explain the mystery of Christ's person, Justin Martyr said a beautiful word, "I am too little to say something great about Him." It could not be said better. In one of his prayers Clement rejoices in his knowledge of the one true God. "All in One, in whom is all, for whom all is One, for whom is eternity, whose members we all are, whose glory the ages are; for the All-good, All-lovely, All-wise, All-just One. To whom be glory now and for ever."¹ His "Hymn to Christ" still holds the loveliness of his devotion. "O King of saints, all-subduing Word of the most high Father, Ruler of wis-

¹ *The Instructor*, III, xii.

dom, Support of sorrows, rejoicing in eternity, Jesus, Saviour of the human race, Shepherd, Husbandman, Helm, Bridle, Heavenly Wing of the all-holy flock, Fisher of men who are saved, catching the chaste fishes with sweet life from the hateful wave of a sea of vices, —Guide us, Shepherd of rational sheep; guide unharmed children, O holy King, O footsteps of Christ, O Heavenly Way, Perennial Word, Immeasurable Age, Eternal Light, Fount of Mercy, Performer of Virtue; noble is the life of those who hymn God, O Christ Jesus.”¹

So it was with Origen. What could be more incisive and modern in its approach than his words in *Contra Celsum* in which his ethics is tied in a living bond to his theology, his service to man to his life in Christ?—

“Agreeably to the promise of Jesus, His disciples performed even greater works than these miracles of Jesus, which were perceptible only to the senses. For the eyes of those who are blind in soul are ever opened; and the ears of those who were deaf to virtuous words, listen readily to the doctrine of God, and of the blessed life with Him; and many, too, who were lame in the feet of the ‘inner man,’ as Scripture calls it, having now been healed by the word, do not simply leap, but leap as the hart, which is an animal hostile to serpents, and stronger than all the poison of vipers. And these lame who have been healed, receive from Jesus power to trample, with those feet in which they were formerly lame, upon the serpents and scorpions of wickedness, and generally upon all the power of the enemy.”²

It is when the preacher produces a superior product, when Christians outlive their critics, that the last word in apologetics has been spoken.

¹ *The Instructor*, III, xii.

² *Contra Celsum*, II, xlvi.

It has been the claim of Christianity, and that claim has been abundantly verified in experience, that wherever the Gospel goes it brings light to those who sit in darkness. After a visit to the Orient, the late Francis G. Peabody told students of Harvard:

“I was once travelling in an Oriental country, where life was squalid, women despised, and houses built of mud; and of a sudden, I came upon a village where all seemed changed. The houses had gardens before them and curtains in their windows; the children did not beg of the passer-by, but called out a friendly greeting. What had happened? I was fifty miles from a Christian mission-station, and this mission had been there for precisely fifty years. Slowly and patiently the influence had radiated at the rate of a mile a year, so that one could now for a space of fifty miles across that barren land perceive the salt of the Christian spirit, and could see the light of the Christian life shining as from a lighthouse fifty miles away.”¹

Christianity under such circumstances is its own apologetic. The Christian preacher today must meet the challenge of Nietzsche, “Redeemers must you show yourselves to be, if I would believe your Redeemer.”

¹ *Mornings in the College Chapel*, ii, 53.

IV

THE PREACHING OF THE LATIN APOLOGISTS

THE Greek Apologists were philosophers. They held the position that God had spoken to the Jews through Moses and that He had spoken also to the Greeks through Plato. Philosophy was the schoolmaster to lead the Gentile world to Christ. It was a light to guide seeking pilgrims into the true way of life. The Greek Apologists commended the Gospel to thinking Greeks by asserting that Jesus was the Logos—the word of God made flesh. They were interested in interpreting Christianity in terms of Greek thought. They commended it to the wisdom-loving people of the East by accepting the wisdom of the East and by claiming that Christ came not to destroy but to fulfil. There were, of course, elements of danger in this approach and that danger is seen in the ramifications of Gnosticism, which sought to use the Gospel by adapting it to Greek metaphysics. Instead of the Gospel bringing Greek philosophy under tribute to the Gospel, too frequently the Gospel itself was Hellenized and obscured in the subtleties of the Logos doctrine.

The Latin Apologists, on the other hand, disdained to use philosophy in defense of the Christian faith. Tertullian and Cyprian, the chief representatives of the Latin church, were cultured and educated churchmen. They read Greek and wrote Greek, but, nevertheless, they were out of touch and out of sympathy with Greek

thought. They were believers in the Christian interpretation of God and the world and in the revelation of God as He is revealed in Jesus Christ, and refused to concede that revelation belonged to the writings of the Greeks. They poured contempt upon the philosophers and held them in low esteem. "What has the Academy to do with the church? And what has Christ to do with Plato, or Jerusalem with Antioch?" said Tertullian. His famous watchword was *Credo quia absurdum est*—"I believe because it is absurd (impossible)." Such a position the Greek Apologists would not have understood. It is a position, however, that is quite modern. It is championed, in a sense, by the Barthian school which restricts revelation to the Incarnation. The so-called Barthian school of theology would stand with Tertullian as against Origen. Barth and Brunner would give philosophy its own sphere of influence, but would deny to it any rights and privileges in the realm of revelation, and Christianity is revelation. "Theology," says Barth, "cannot appear as a quest for truth or a philosophy of general truth. So far as theology bows to the truth of revelation, it understands that the different world views which are designated 'truth' are, at best, only relative, tentative, and limited truth. It is not, however, the task of theology to place itself, so to speak, over or between the antithesis between God's revelation and human reason and its world views, so as to establish a relation between these two, to present revelation as reason, or reason as revelation, and thereby bring them into one system."¹ In his *Credo* he is still more emphatic. "It is forced down my throat," he exclaims, "that the dogmatic theologian is under obligation to 'justify' himself in his utterances

¹ *God in Action*, pages 47-48.

before philosophy. To that my answer is likewise, No. Dogmatics has to justify itself only before God in Jesus Christ; concretely, before Holy Scripture within the Church. Certainly it has also the responsibility of speaking so that it can be *understood*, but there is not the slightest chance that any philosophy could here step forth as norm.”¹ In like manner Brunner contends for the independence of Christian theology. “Christian faith, to which theology gives the form of scientific conceptions,” he says, “is the knowledge and acknowledgment of God’s self-revelation in Jesus Christ. He, the incarnate logos, is the ground, content, and standard of all the affirmations of faith. That is where faith differs from every religion as well as from every philosophy. By Christian faith is meant, not some universal truth, nor yet some universal religious experience, but a definite fact, which as such is opposed to every universal, be it religion or philosophy.”² So, too, speaks Karl Heim who can scarcely be called a Barthian. “We stand,” he says, “before One Who is not to be reached directly by any inference from given reality. We stand before the ‘Unknown God.’”³ This was the attitude of the Latin Apologists to truth. They stood upon the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and sought no support from the philosophers.

The Latin Apologists Tertullian and Cyprian were the Puritans of their day, interested in conduct, in the church, its organization, its progress, its enlarging influence. They were builders. It was his interest in the advancement of the Gospel that led Tertullian to give some of his best years to the Montanist movement. While it is true that he departed in many important

¹ *Credo*, page 185.

² *The Philosophy of Religion*, page 13.

³ *God Transcendent*, page 226.

aspects from the teaching of Montanism as it was known in the East, he was, nevertheless, attracted to it because of its emphasis upon the abiding and continuing power of the Holy Spirit in the church. He was unwilling to confine the work of the Spirit within the confines of the Apostolic Church or to Pentecost. His interest in the expansion of the church drew Tertullian to this movement, although he avoided most of its extravagances. The active, ongoing work of the Christian Church held the hearts of these Latin Apologists. Perhaps the atmosphere of Africa had something to do with their attitude. The African Church grew tremendously and, although we know little about its origin and development, it possessed a culture of its own. It is likely that Christianity passed from Rome to Carthage and grew in strength and influence with surprising rapidity. When Cyprian was bishop a council, attended by as many as seventy bishops from North Africa, was convened; and in the time of Augustine there were more than five hundred bishops established in and around Carthage. The church in North Africa is a striking example of the self-propagating power of Christianity early manifested in the world.

Tertullian and Cyprian, the outstanding Latin Apologists, were essentially churchmen. Tertullian was born about 160, the son of a Roman centurion. His parents were well-to-do pagans who gave their promising son a liberal education. He knew personally the good and bad in paganism. He was a twice-born man and enjoyed the glory and the gladness of a definite Christian experience. He became the founder of the theology of the Western church, the precursor of Augustine, the fashioner of the Christian Latin style, creating out of sheer necessity a vocabulary capable of

expressing the Christian experience. Eusebius has a few words to say of him, "a man well versed in the laws of the Romans, and in other respects of high repute, and one of those especially distinguished in Rome."¹

"He was [says Farrar] certainly the most powerful writer who had appeared since the days of the Apostles. To estimate his merits fully we must remember that he created Christian Latin literature; that, as Harnack says, it sprang from him full grown, and that before him it could possess little or nothing but a translation of the Bible, the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix, and the Muratorian fragments. Narrow, rigid, realistic as is his system, it is yet 'traversed by splendid gleams of genius and of eloquence.' His style is unique. It is 'rich in thought, and destitute of form, passionate and hair-splitting, eloquent and obscure.' Like Jerome, he wields the Latin language with a new force, and introduces into it some elements which were untried even by Cicero."²

He despised secular literature and Greek philosophy. He called Socrates and Aristotle "the patriarchs of heretics." He was a pronounced controversialist, interested in overwhelming his opponent and not much concerned as to how it was done. He was often unscrupulous, unfair, and even merciless. He made no compromise with paganism and denounced the ethics which was the fruit of emperor worship. He was forty-two when converted to Christianity, and found in the Gospel the satisfaction he had been seeking. He spoke often of the "witness of a soul naturally Christian," believing that every human being could find in Christ the complement of all that was best in himself.

¹ *The Church History of Eusebius*, II, 2, 4.

² *Lives of the Fathers*, Vol. I, page 241.

Trained to be a lawyer, he was at heart a soldier, a fighting Christian, and yet he spoke words of peace to an empire that was built on militarism. The attitude of the early church to war has been a debated question and is much discussed in our day. The conditions surrounding Roman military service were so different from those which pertain in our time that a comparison is difficult. The Roman soldier was more than a soldier, he was a police officer, a governor, a prefect, an administrator responsible for the proper observance of religious festivals and the worship of the emperor. Furthermore, Jews and slaves were not eligible and all needed soldiers could be obtained by voluntary enlistment. Nevertheless, Tertullian, and likewise Cyprian, spoke out strongly against military service for Christians. Tertullian says that Jesus "cursed the works of the sword for ever and ever." "The old law," he says, "vindicated itself by the vengeance of the sword, and plucked out eye for eye, and requited injury with punishment; but the new law pointed to clemency, and changed the former savagery of swords and lances into tranquillity, and refashioned the former infliction of war upon rivals and foes of the law into the peaceful acts of ploughing and cultivating the earth."¹ The voice of Cyprian was also heard in the interests of peace. "The world," he says, "is wet with mutual blood (shed): and homicide is a crime when individuals commit it, (but) it is called a virtue, when it is carried on publicly."² It would be a mistake, however, to conclude that Tertullian and Cyprian were pacifists as that term is interpreted today.

Cyprian was the disciple of Tertullian. Every day

¹ *Against the Jews*, 3, iii, 604.

² *The Epistles of Cyprian*, 6, 10.

he turned to the works of Tertullian, saying "*Da magistrum*"—"give me the Master." Indeed, it has been charged that the disciple frequently copied from the master, in other words that he was a plagiarist. But in the realm of preaching and theological writing it is difficult, even impossible, to define plagiarism. What is sermonic plagiarism? How much of any man's preaching is wholly original and how far may one preacher take another man's thought and dress it up in language and call it his own? Canon Liddon used to speak of "the inspiration of selection." Perhaps Rudyard Kipling has said all that needs to be said on the subject:

"When 'Omer smote 'is bloomin' lyre,
He'd 'eard men sing by land an' sea;
An' what he thought 'e might require,
'E went an' took—the same as me!

"The market-girls an' fishermen,
The shepherds an' the sailors, too,
They 'eard old songs turn up again,
But kep' it quiet—same as you!

"They knew 'e stole; 'e knew they knowed.
They didn't tell, nor make a fuss,
But winked at 'Omer down the road,
An' 'e winked back—the same as us! "

The Apologists were preachers, great preachers, but not in our interpretation of the term. Instead they were writers, controversialists, striking blows for the truth with pen and word. They created a new vocabulary out of the Latin tongue. They hammered out their doctrines on the anvil of present necessity. They were

not interested in homilies or homiletics. They despised the oratory of the rhetoricians, which was to invade the church a century later. In his treatise to Donatus, Cyprian expressly says that

“in courts of justice, in the public assembly, in political debate, a copious eloquence may be the glory of a voluble ambition; but in speaking of the Lord God, a chaste simplicity of expression strives for the conviction of faith rather with the substance, than with the powers, of eloquence. Therefore, accept from me things, not clever but weighty, words, not decked up to charm a popular audience with cultivated rhetoric, but simple and fitted by their unvarnished truthfulness for the proclamation of the divine mercy. Accept what is felt before it is spoken, what has not been accumulated with tardy painstaking during the lapse of years, but has been inhaled in one breath of ripening grace.”¹

Tertullian possessed originality and the spark of genius. He forced the Latin language to express his thoughts. His style was rugged. His thought was like a mountain torrent. Farrar, in seeking to describe his preaching, says:

“He puts no restraint either on his feelings or his language, but pours forth his rage and scorn and sarcasm, or develops his forensic sophisms in dealing with the most solemn and sacred subjects. His style has been compared by Balzac to ebony, at once dark and resplendent. His terseness and energy make his pages sparkle with expressions which have become proverbial. ‘What greater pleasure is there than to despise pleasure?’ ‘The blood of martyrs is germinant.’ ‘Christians are made, not born.’ ‘Christ is truth, not custom.’ ‘Where there are three, even be they laymen, there is the Church.’ ‘Are not we laymen, too, priests?’ ‘It is

¹ *Epistle I, 2.*

contrary to religion to compel religion.' 'I believe, because it is absurd.' 'It is absolutely credible, because it is absurd—it is certain, because impossible.' 'What has Christ to do with Plato, or the Church with the Academy?' 'No one, not even a human being, will wish himself to be adored by an unwilling votary.' 'God has His witnesses—the sum total of what we are and in which we are.' 'Truth is not on the surface but in the inmost heart.' 'The human race has always deserved ill of God.' 'How wise an arguer does ignorance seem to herself!' These are sentiments and turns of expression which are not easily forgotten, and there are many more shining out like jewels on a dark background on almost every page. The style is of the man; it is incandescent as the heart from which it is poured forth; it burns with the sombre flame visible through the smoke of a volcano. Austere, fiery, passionate, satirical, dictatorial, perverse, learned, hyperbolic, he reminds us of no writer so much as of Carlyle. But much as Carlyle resembled Tertullian in vehemence and exaggeration he never sank so low into subtle special pleadings."¹

The thrill of his eloquence is often heard in his arguments. He is talking about the creation of the world and the insufficiency of the heresy of the Marcionites:

"Then is the Creator not at all a God? By all means He is God. Therefore the world is not unworthy of God, for God has made nothing unworthy of Himself. . . . I will come down to humbler objects. A single floweret from the hedgerow, I say not from the meadows; a single little shellfish from any sea, I say not from the Red Sea; a single stray wing of a moorfowl, I say nothing of the peacock,—will, I presume, prove to you that the Creator was but a sorry artificer! Now, when you make merry with those minuter animals, which their glorious Maker has purposely endued with a profusion of instincts and resources,—thereby teach-

¹ *Lives of the Fathers*, Vol. I, pages 242-243.

ing us that greatness has its proofs in lowliness, just as, according to the apostle, there is power even in infirmity,—imitate, if you can, the cells of the bee, the hills of the ant, the webs of the spider, and the threads of the silkworm; endure, too, if you know how, those very creatures which infest your couch and house, the poisonous ejections of the blister beetle, the spikes of the fly, and the gnat's sheath and sting. What of the greater animals, when the small ones so affect you with pleasure or pain that you cannot even in their case despise their Creator?"¹

Speaking of the resurrection and seeking to interpret it to those who were his antagonists, he said:

"Day dies into night, and is buried everywhere in darkness. The glory of the world is obscured in the shadow of death; its entire substance is tarnished with blackness; all things become sordid, silent, stupid; everywhere business ceases, and occupations rest. And so over the loss of the light there is mourning. But yet it again revives, with its own beauty, its own dowry, its own sun, the same as ever, whole and entire, over all the world, slaying its own death, night—opening its own sepulchre, the darkness—coming forth the heir to itself, until the night also revives—it, too, accompanied with a retinue of its own. . . . Nothing perishes but with a view to salvation. The whole, therefore, of this revolving order of things bears witness to the resurrection of the dead."²

If Tertullian was, *par excellence*, the controversialist, Cyprian was the ecclesiastic. "Tertullian was vehement, sarcastic, impulsive, defiant; Cyprian was calm, practical, authoritative. The eloquence of Tertullian is like a torrent of molten lava, that of Cyprian like a limpid if somewhat shallow stream. Tertullian was a

¹ *The Five Books Against Marcion*, Book I, 13-14.

² *On The Resurrection of the Flesh*, Chapter XII.

man of genius, and Cyprian was a man of talents who borrowed wholesale from his predecessors.”¹ Cyprian, like Tertullian, was born of heathen parents, who were wealthy and distinguished. He inherited a rich estate, which he devoted to the church. Educated for the law, he prepared himself by a study of eloquence. He was given a good education and taught rhetoric with great success. At the age of forty-six he became a Christian. He was not an original thinker and in his writings we hear the echoes of other leaders of the Christian Church, especially Tertullian and Origen. He was an ardent churchman and contended for the Christian faith against all forms of heresy. His social position and his devoted loyalty added to the prestige of the cause he championed, and when he was consecrated bishop in 248 he was addressed by the title of Papa, or pope, a name first given to the Bishop of Alexandria and, following Cyprian, to the Bishop of Rome. He was constantly in danger of his life and felt justified in fleeing from danger. The time came, however, when he resolved to stand fast and he informed his people that he would never again withdraw under persecution. When the crisis came his friends urged him to flee but he felt he could serve the church best by dying for his faith, and at the age of fifty-eight he received the martyr's crown. His last request was that as a token of forgiveness twenty-five pieces of gold be given to his executioner. To avoid curiosity his body was buried in the night with prayer and solemn thanksgiving.

The Latin Apologists were set for the defense not only of the Christian faith but of the Christian Church. Their apologetic was centered on the church: its au-

¹ Farrar, *Lives of the Fathers*, Vol. I, page 249.

thority, its purity, its service, its success in the world. Thus early do we meet with the evidence presented by the community of saints, the beloved society, the brotherhood, the *koinonia*—which later became the hope of the world, the new City of God in the midst of a civilization which was disintegrating. The motto of Cyprian became a watchword, *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus*—"Apart from the church there is no salvation." Such a statement could not be made if the church itself had not become self-conscious. "You ought to know," says Cyprian, "that the bishop is in the church, and the church in the bishop; and if any one be not with the bishop, that he is not in the church, and that those flatter themselves in vain who creep in, not having peace with God's priests, and think that they communicate secretly with some; while the church, which is Catholic and one, is not cut nor divided, but is indeed connected and bound together by the cement of priests who cohere with one another."¹

This same high doctrine of the church was shared by Tertullian.

"The Apostles [he says] founded churches in every city, from which all the other churches, one after another, derived the tradition of the faith, and the seeds of doctrine, and are every day deriving them, that they may become churches. Indeed, it is on this account only that they will be able to deem themselves apostolic, as being the offspring of apostolic churches. Every sort of thing must necessarily revert to its original for its classification. Therefore, the churches, although they are so many and so great, comprise but the one primitive church, (founded) by the apostles, from which they all (spring). In this way all are primitive, and all are apostolic, whilst they are all proved to be one, in (unbroken)

¹ *Epistle* 68:8.

unity, by their peaceful communion, and title of brotherhood, and bond of hospitality,—privileges which no other rule directs than the one tradition of the selfsame mystery.”¹

It would be a mistake to read back into these words interpretations which those who seek to establish their claim to apostolicity place upon them. Words change their significance in the course of time, and take to themselves new content which they did not originally possess. It is sufficient here to point out the new emphasis. The words of Cyprian are sweet and healing words:

“The episcopate is one, each part of which is held by each one for the whole. The Church also is one, which is spread abroad far and wide into a multitude by an increase of fruitfulness. As there are many rays of the sun, but one light; and many branches of a tree, but one strength based in its tenacious root; and since from one spring flow many streams, although the multiplicity seems diffused in the liberality of an overflowing abundance, yet the unity is still preserved in the course. Separate a ray of the sun from its body of light, its unity does not allow a division of light; break a branch from a tree,—when broken, it will not be able to bud; cut off the stream from its fountain, and that which is cut off dries up. Thus also the Church, shone over with the light of the Lord, sheds forth her rays over the whole world, yet it is one light which is everywhere diffused, nor is the unity of the body separated. Her fruitful abundance spreads her branches over the whole world. She broadly expands her rivers, liberally flowing, yet her head is one, her source one; and she is one mother, plentiful in the results of fruitfulness: from her womb we are born, by her milk we are nourished, by her spirit we are animated.”²

¹ *On Prescription Against Heretics*, Chapter 20.

² *The Treatises of Cyprian*, I, 5.

It is sufficient here to point out that there has been a revival of this apologetic in our day. It is one of the striking facts of our time that the church has taken a central place not only in the thought of Christians but as evidence of the historic continuity of Christianity. The Church itself, its existence, its history, its testimony, its essential unity, is an apologetic which has weight with our generation. Let those who challenge the reality of the Christian faith make answer as to the presence of a united church in a divided world. What is this society that defies Communism, Fascism, National Socialism, and keeps alive an intellectual and spiritual fellowship when all other bonds are severed? This new creation in history is inescapable evidence for the reality of the Christian faith. Protestantism gathered in Edinburgh gave expression to this challenging fact:

“We are one in faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God. We are one in allegiance to Him as Head of the Church, and as King of kings and Lord of lords. We are one in acknowledging that this allegiance takes precedence of any other allegiance that may make claims upon us. This unity does not consist in the agreement of our minds or the consent of our wills. It is founded in Jesus Christ Himself, Who lived, died and rose again to bring us to the Father, and Who through the Holy Spirit dwells in His Church. We are one because we are all the objects of the love and grace of God, and called by Him to witness in all the world to His glorious gospel.”¹

This unity is the amazing miracle of our age.

The church, in its united testimony, is the supreme

¹ *The Second World Conference on Faith and Order*, page 275.

Christian apologetic for our day. Whence came it? What keeps it alive? What binds it into a unity? What influence inspires its common message? The book which rests on the pulpit, whence came it? The hymnal, enshrining the Christian experience of all nations and all centuries, whence came it? The sanctuary, filled with reverent and adoring people, whence came it? The innumerable congregations that follow in the train of other congregations bound by a golden chain of song and salvation to the Christians of the first century, whence came they? They are here because Christ is risen, the Saviour and Lord of all. It is the Christian Church and the Christian Church only which challenges the world ideologies which now seek the overthrow of religious and political freedom. The renowned scientist Albert Einstein is reported to have said:

“ Being a lover of freedom, when the revolution came in Germany, I looked to the universities to defend it, knowing that they had always boasted of their devotion to the cause of truth; but, no, the universities immediately were silenced. Then I looked to the great editors of the newspapers whose flaming editorials in days gone by had proclaimed their love of freedom; but they, like the universities, were silenced in a few short weeks. . . . Only the church stood squarely across the path of Hitler’s campaign for suppressing truth. I never had any special interest in the church before, but now I feel a great affection and admiration because the church alone has had the courage and persistence to stand for intellectual truth and moral freedom. I am forced thus to confess that what I once despised I now praise unreservedly.”¹

For this, then, did the Latin Apologists contend.

¹ *Time*, December 23, 1940, page 38.

They claimed that a new society was of urgent necessity because the old society was decadent, impure, immoral. Says Tertullian:

“ We renounce all your spectacles, as strongly as we renounce the matters originating them, which we know were conceived of superstition, when we give up the very things which are the basis of their representations. Among us nothing is ever said, or seen, or heard, which has anything in common with the madness of the circus, the immodesty of the theatre, the atrocities of the arena, the useless exercises of the wrestling ground. Why do you take offense at us because we differ from you in regard to your pleasures? If we will not partake of your enjoyments, the loss is ours, if there be loss in the case, not yours. We reject what please you. You, on the other hand, have no taste for what is our delight.”¹

Again, he says, “ You say the temple revenues are every day falling off: how few now throw in a contribution! In truth, we are not able to give alms both to your human and your heavenly mendicants; nor do we think that we are required to give any but to those who ask for it. Let Jupiter, then, hold out his hand and get, for our compassion spends more in the streets than yours does in the temples.”²

In like manner, Cyprian cried out against the immoral customs of those who antagonized the Gospel:

“ In the theatres also you will behold what may well cause you grief and shame. It is the tragic buskin which relates in verse the crimes of ancient days. The old horrors of parricide and incest are unfolded in action calculated to express the image of the truth, so that, as the ages pass by, any crime

¹ *The Apology*, Chapter XXXIII.

² *Ibid.*, Chapter XLII.

that was formerly committed may not be forgotten. Each generation is reminded by what it hears, that whatever has once been done may be done again. Crimes never die out by the lapse of ages; wickedness is never abolished by process of time; impiety is never buried in oblivion. . . .

“Possibly you may think that the Forum at least is free from such things, that it is neither exposed to exasperating wrongs, nor polluted by the association of criminals. Then turn your gaze in that direction: there you will discover things more odious than ever, so that thence you will be more desirous of turning away your eyes, although the laws are carved on twelve tables, and the statutes are publicly prescribed on brazen tablets. Yet wrong is done in the midst of the laws themselves; wickedness is committed in the very face of the statutes; innocence is not preserved even in the place where it is defended.”¹

Such an apologetic requires boldness, courage, sureness of facts. It is a form of attack which today can be marshaled against the brutality of atheistic Russia and the cruelty and lying policies of Germany, the crime and lawlessness of America. The fruit of the anti-God movement is as a poison and a pestilence.

In the second place, the Latin Apologists claimed that while there were defects and lapses in the lives of Christians which perplexed them and broke their hearts, nevertheless the new society formed within the empire, the church, was the very creation of God in history. Even in defeat and death the note of triumph is sounded.

“Our battle [says Tertullian] is to be summoned to your tribunals and there, under fear of execution, we may battle for the truth. But the day is won when the object of the struggle is gained. This victory of ours gives us the glory

¹ *Epistle I, 8, 10.*

of pleasing God, and the spoil of life eternal. But we are overcome. Yes, when we have obtained our wishes. Therefore we conquer in dying; we go forth victorious at the very time we are subdued. Call us, if you like, *Sarmenticii* and *Semaxii*, because, bound to a half-axle stake, we are burned in a circle-heap of fagots. This is the attitude in which we conquer, it is our victory robe, it is for us a sort of triumphal car. Naturally enough, therefore, we do not please the vanquished; on account of this, indeed, we are counted a desperate, reckless race.”¹

The days were dangerous, and it is not a matter of surprise that many sought refuge in a temporary renunciation of their faith. Such defection, however, was not treated lightly. Discipline was severe. Cyprian stood out firmly against the readmission into the church of those who had lapsed without full and adequate repentance. Even baptism could be of no avail to one who had denied the faith, though he suffer as a martyr. He says, “Does he think that he has Christ, who acts in opposition to Christ’s priests, who separates himself from the company of His clergy and people? He bears arms against the Church, he contends against God’s appointment. An enemy of the altar, a rebel against Christ’s sacrifice, for the faith faithless, for religion profane, a disobedient servant, an impious son, a hostile brother, despising the bishops, and forsaking God’s priests, he dares to set up another altar, to make another prayer with unauthorized words, to profane the truth of the Lord’s offering by false sacrifices, and not to know that he who strives against the appointment of God, is punished on account of the daring of his temerity by divine visitation.”² It was this conviction, this uncompromising position, that gave strength and zeal

¹ *The Apology*, Chapter I.

² *Treatise I*, 17.

to the Apologists of the early church. They spoke as St. Paul, "What fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement hath a temple of God with idols? for we are a temple of the living God; even as God said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."¹ There are times when to dilly-dally with the truth is to surrender to the enemy.

In the third place the Latin Apologists pointed with commanding authority to the success Christianity was having in all the world. They could point to the fact that Christianity was spreading everywhere and conquering everything. The early church was marching. It was marching ever forward to new conquests and these conquests were over the enemies of the souls of men. Such a triumphal march made its own appeal. "We are but of yesterday," exclaims Tertullian, "and we have filled every place among you—cities, islands, fortresses, towns, market-places, the very camp, tribes, companies, palace, senate, forum,—we have left nothing to you but the temples of your gods."² There is a tone of exultation in his challenge:

"For upon whom else have the universal nations believed, but upon the Christ who is already come? For whom have the nations believed,—Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and they who inhabit Mesopotamia, Armenia, Phrygia, Cappadocia, and they who dwell in Pontus, and Asia, and Pamphylia, tarriers in Egypt, and inhabitants of the region of Africa which is beyond Cyrene, Romans and sojourners, yes, and in Jerusalem Jews, and all other nations; as, for instance, by

¹ II Corinthians 6: 14-16. ² *The Apology*, Chapter XXXVII.

this time, the varied races of the Gætulians, and manifold confines of the Moors, all the limits of the Spains, and the diverse nations of the Gauls, and the haunts of the Britons—inaccessible to the Romans, but subjugated to Christ, and of the Sarmatians, and Dacians, and Germans, and Scythians, and of many remote nations, and of provinces and islands many, to us unknown, and which we can scarce enumerate? In all which places the name of the Christ who is already come reigns.”¹

Christianity was succeeding because its seed was in itself. It was life-giving.

Furthermore, it was a victory of love over hatred, of faith over fear, of hope over despair, of peace over war, of purity over immorality, of Christ over the powers of the world. In his counsel to his people, before his martyrdom, Cyprian pleaded for kindness to all. “I request,” he said, “that you will diligently take care of the widows, and of the sick, and of all the poor. Moreover, you may supply the expenses for strangers, if any should be indigent, from my own portion, which I have left with Rogatianus, our fellow-presbyter, which portion, lest it should be all appropriated, I have supplemented by sending to the same by Naricus the acolyte another share, so that the sufferers may be more largely and promptly dealt with.”²

This note of solicitude and concern for the poor, the needy, the unemployed, the prisoner, repeats itself. If Tertullian could be severe he also could be gentle.

“We meet together [he says] as an assembly and congregation, that, offering up prayer to God as with united force, we may wrestle with Him in our supplications. This violence God delights in. We pray, too, for the emperors,

¹ *An Answer to the Jews*, Chapter VII.

² *Epistle XXXV*.

for their ministers and for all in authority, for the welfare of the world, for the prevalence of peace, for the delay of the final consummation. We assemble to read our sacred writings, if any peculiarity of the times makes either forewarning or reminiscence needful. . . .

“ Though we have our treasure chest, it is not made up of purchase money, as of a religion that has its price. On the monthly day, if he likes, each puts in a small donation; but only if it be his pleasure, and only if he be able: for there is no compulsion; all is voluntary. These gifts are, as it were, piety’s deposit fund. For they are not taken thence and spent on feasts, and drinking bouts, and eating houses, but to support and bury poor people, to supply the wants of boys and girls destitute of means and parents, and of old persons confined now to the house; such, too, as have suffered shipwreck; and if there happen to be any in the mines, or banished to the islands, or shut up in the prisons, for nothing but their fidelity to the cause of God’s church, they become the nurslings of their confession. But it is mainly the deeds of a love so noble that lead many to put a brand upon us. See, they say, how they love one another.”¹

The Christian Apologists believed that love was the incontrovertible evidence for the faith they professed. They practised what has been called the Eleventh Commandment, “ A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another.” And this love found expression in a new fellowship within the Christian Church, for the church presented to the pagan world a new ideal, a new society, a *koinonia*, a beloved brotherhood, in which the rich and the poor, master and slave, Greek and Jew, found a common unity. Old things had passed away, all things had become new. The church itself, its very existence, its service, its fellowship was unanswerable evidence, for the African Apolo-

¹ *The Apology*, Chapter XXXIX.

gists exalted the church not so much as an ecclesiastical organization as a new social order. Therefore said Cyprian, "he who breaks the peace and the concord of Christ, does so in opposition to Christ."¹ "He cannot possess the garment of Christ who parts and divides the church of Christ."² "The Holy Spirit," he said, "came as a dove, a simple and joyous creature, not bitter with gall, not cruel in its bite, not violent with the rending of its claws, loving human dwellings, knowing the association of one home; when they have young, bringing forth their young together; when they fly abroad, remaining in their flights by the side of one another, spending their life in mutual intercourse, acknowledging the concord of peace with the kiss of the beak, in all things fulfilling the law of unanimity."³

The cataclysmic disaster which has fallen upon our world brings the preacher of today face to face with a frontal attack upon the faith which he proclaims. The antagonists of Christianity today are legion. They speak in the name of science, in the name of philosophy, in the name of economics, and of pseudo-religions. They speak in the voice of Marx and Lenin. It is a voice speaking in unmistakable materialistic terms.

"Materialism [says an authoritative Communist writer] considers it wrong to place spirit at the base of all phenomena. It regards matter as the basis of everything and asserts that matter exists independently and outside of our mind. The external material world reacts on our mind, is reflected in it and determines it. Matter is the primary, the fundamental; mind is secondary and derivative. Mind is inseparably connected with matter; it is a property of matter organized in a

¹ *Epistle VI.*

² *Ibid.*, VII.

³ *Ibid.*, IX.

special way, viz., our brain, and is a product of the latter's activity. Mind reflects the external world. There can be no mind or thought without brain. The idealists sever thought from the brain and consider that spirit is the beginning of all things. The idealists turn the whole course of things upside down. In their opinion matter is derived from spirit. Materialism declares that there is no spirit world; there is no transcendental world; the world is unitary and its unity lies, as Engels says, in its materialism."¹

In commenting upon this ideology, Christopher Dawson says:

"There are two currents in Communist thought, and the future character of Communist culture depends in a great degree on which of these tendencies becomes predominant. Hitherto and at the present time the strict materialism of the Leninist tradition has alone possessed an official character. It is the orthodox doctrine, while the more idealistic strain is regarded as an heretical modernism. Nevertheless, it is by no means impossible that the latter may finally prevail, and if it does so there may be a corresponding change in the whole spirit of the Communist regime. In any case, however, the opposition to Christian thought remains. No reconciliation is possible between materialism, even in its most idealized form, and the Catholic faith in God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the Maker and Redeemer of man, the Lord and Giver of Life."²

It is this position the new apologetic must answer. In this task we will have the help of scientists, philosophers, economists and men of letters who believe in the words of Eddington that "the solid substance of things is an illusion. It is a fancy projected by the mind into the external world. We have chased the solid sub-

¹ Adoratsky, *Dialectical Materialism*, page 65.

² *Religion and the Modern State*, pages 100-101.

stance from the continuous liquid of the atom, from the atom to the electron and there we have lost it. The stuff of this world is not matter, it is mind stuff." The church faces a world in conflict, a world hostile to the higher spiritual values, as hostile as that which challenged the preachers of the second and third centuries. Once again the Christian Church fights, as it has often done, with its back to the wall. What can the church do in the light of the present challenging situation? It can do three things.

First of all, it can *simplify its message*. Like the New Testament, it can concentrate upon the essence of the Gospel. That is what the apostolic church did. When there was danger of division and the matter was referred to the first church council, the presiding officer spoke these words, "Wherefore my judgment is, that we trouble not them that from among the Gentiles turn to God." The English is too weak to express the thought. What St. James said was that no fresh difficulties, no unnecessary hindrances, "no unexpected annoyances," should be put in the way of those whom they were seeking to evangelize. The path must be plain. The trumpet note must be clear. The word must be sure. Is it sure? Reporting on his five vacation Sundays, a Scotch minister recently said, "The first four Sundays really left one wondering if there was anything in religion. . . . The fifth Sunday an old minister entered the pulpit with a rather severe expression on his face. He did not look helpful. Then I got the surprise of my life. 'Let us worship God,' the old preacher said, and immediately one thought 'Here is reality.' The service throbbed with vitality. It was his vocation to preach Christ." Is the word we preach a "sure" word? The door into the pulpit is narrow and

the place where the minister stands is strait. His message is limited. He is a herald and the message is a given one.

This doctrine is not, perhaps, popular, but it is true. We like to be broad, to be tolerant, to be generous-minded. There are so many things the Christian Church may do. It is called upon today to do a multitude of things. There are not enough Sundays in the year for all the appeals that are on the minister's desk. It is asked to do something about everything—to solve our social problems, our industrial problems, our international problems, to stop war, to stop crime, to stop the liquor traffic. And it must and should do something about all these great pressing problems, but it will serve these causes best by a policy of resolved limitation. For indeed the church has only one asset, one message. The world can rival and outclass the church on almost every issue but one. It can outclass our preaching. The world has better music than we can give, better architecture, a more appealing ritual, finer organization, a more immediate social program. There is only one direction in which the church can go. The gate is strait and the way is narrow. The only asset the church has is Christ. The only message the church has is that once in the history of the world God came into human life in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of David, that He lived His life within the confines of a little country on the other side of the world, that He died upon the cross for the sin of mankind, that He rose again from the dead and now lives and moves among men.

This is the message of the church, and, proclaiming that message, it thrusts forth the challenge, "What are you going to do about it?" It may be that the church

has lost something of its place of power because it has sought to serve in too wide an area, has a diffused rather than a concentrated purpose. The church, if it is to win the critics and convert the pagans, must simplify its message. In the Apologists, the note of the apostolic *kerygma* is clear. "The rule of faith," says Tertullian, "is altogether one, alone immovable and irreformable; the rule, to wit, of believing in one only God omnipotent, the Creator of the universe, and His Son Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, raised again the third day from the dead, received in the heavens, sitting now at the right (hand) of the Father, destined to come to judge quick and dead."¹

The second thing the church can do is to *magnify its fellowship*. There are two words in the New Testament for the church—*ecclesia* and *koinonia*. *Ecclesia* means those who are called out, out of the world into a new order. *Koinonia* means fellowship and that fellowship creates the Christian community, the beloved society. The world called those who belonged to this new society "a third race." It is Christ and Christ alone who creates this Christian fellowship and makes possible the common life which realizes itself in what is called the church. Christians live their lives in Him. Those who in the familiar but often forgotten language of St. Paul are one "in Jesus Christ." "There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus." The early church was radiant in the light of this new fellowship. "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul . . . and all that believed were together . . . and

¹ *On the Veiling of Virgins*, Chapter I.

day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people." No wonder the spirit of evangelism was upon such a church. The record closes with the words, "And the Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved."

What the world is eagerly seeking after, the Christian Church confesses to have found. What is the world seeking? It is surely with one heart and soul seeking security, fellowship, a perfected society. Russia calls it Communism. Germany calls it National Socialism. Italy calls it Fascism. Japan calls it "The Spirit of Japan." There is agreement as to the goal but there is no unity as to the path leading thither. The seekers of our own land who have been prophets of a new heaven and especially of a new earth have created a vocabulary that has long had the headlines. Sometimes the words have merely an economic flavor and sometimes they are colored with religion. Sometimes it is called the Kingdom of God, the new social order, the abundant life, industrial democracy. It is the confession of our age that the world is everywhere seeking fellowship, comradeship, the acknowledgment that the good of each must be the good of all. But in its seeking it has failed to find.

The early church, however, achieved this new order. They created a fellowship, a brotherhood, a community, a society, which was the wonder of the world, and called forth a vocabulary, the content of which was filled in by new virtues. This fellowship is largely lacking in the modern church. A discerning writer has said that a city church is made up of people who do not

know each other and do not wish to know each other, whereas a country church is made up of people who do know each other and are sorry they do! There is nothing winsome about such churches. The church that can create the warm atmosphere of sympathy, of good feeling, of common interest is the greatest evangelistic influence possible. Both critics and pagans are drawn into such a fellowship.

It is through the Christian society, the beloved community, that the new social order will come. From this point of view our modern prophets of the new day have been too individualistic. They have short-circuited the church. They have ignored the Christian fellowship and sought to establish a secular brotherhood in a world that owes no allegiance to Christ. They have gone direct to pagans and critics of the church seeking to make the Sermon on the Mount operative in a secular society. There have been clergymen and Christian workers on fire for social righteousness who have failed to achieve their objective within their own Christian community, and yet who hope to establish it in the world. The hope of a Christian fellowship is the hope of a world fellowship, and if we cannot achieve peace, unity, co-operation within the church, how can we expect to accomplish anything among people who have no Christian loyalties?

Furthermore, it is through fellowship, the fellowship of Christians in the family, the group and the church, that the grace of God is mediated. It is always so. Life comes from life. It is so in art, in education, in science, in literature, and in religion. It is the Christian society that holds in its keeping the responsibility under God for the redemption of men. The antithesis of a personal and a social gospel is false. It is untrue.

Grace is conveyed through the channels of the Christian community. Think through your own experience and you will discover that it was from some contact with the Christian community that Christ was born again in you. It must be so for it is only from life that life comes. It is along these lines that the church will enter again into the secret of power. It is from this point of view that Protestant Christians can accept Cyprian's formula, *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. The Westminster Confession of Faith puts it thus: "The visible Church . . . is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation."¹

In the third place, arguments used against the anti-Christian forces at work in the world today may be difficult to marshal. Perhaps arguments will prove futile. It may be that the only rebuttal will come not from argument but from life. In the days of Tertullian pagans turned aside to say, "See how these Christians love one another," and their noisy criticism was silenced by the grandeur of the lives that were being lived, so it may be in our day. Perhaps our preaching and our programs, our books and our pamphlets, will count for little. It may be that our practise will have to overtake our profession. It may be that as Christians we will have to demonstrate to an unbelieving world a higher and nobler quality of character than that which has yet been revealed; a character better equipped to suffer and to serve, to endure and to manifest the love of God in all relations. The Christian ideal in itself cannot be overthrown by any doctrine of the superman, or any display of frightfulness. It is absolute, only we must see to it that the Christian life

¹ Chapter XXV, iii.

is the best life, the Christian home the best home, the Christian Church the best fellowship, the Christian social order the best community, the Christian nation the best, the strongest, the most enduring.

We are in the midst of a storm which in time must blow itself out. The qualities required are patience, courage, endurance. The motto is "Having done all to stand." Perhaps John Buchan has put the modern apologetic as well as any. He says:

"There have been high civilisations in the past which have not been Christian, but in the world as we know it I believe that civilisation must have a Christian basis, and must ultimately rest on the Christian Church. Today the Faith is being attacked, and the attack is succeeding. Thirty years ago Europe was nominally a Christian continent. It is no longer so. In Europe, as in the era before Constantine, Christianity is in a minority. What Gladstone wrote seventy years ago, in a moment of depression, has become a shattering truth: 'I am convinced that the welfare of mankind does not now depend on the State and the world of politics; the real battle is being fought in the world of thought, where a deadly attack is made with great tenacity of purpose and over a wide field upon the greatest treasure of mankind, the belief in God and the Gospel of Christ.' The Christian in name has in recent years been growing cold in his devotion. Our achievement in perfecting life's material apparatus has produced a mood of self-confidence and pride. Our peril has been indifference, and that is a grave peril, for rust will crumble a metal when hammer blows will only harden it. I believe—and this is my crowning optimism—that the challenge with which we are now faced may restore to us that manly humility which alone gives power. It may bring us back to God. In that case our victory is assured. The Faith is an anvil which has worn out many hammers."¹

¹ *Pilgrim's Way*, page 297.

Let this, too, be the preacher's "crowning optimism," that victory is assured if he will place the trumpet to his lips, and awaken the sleeping conscience of the nation.

THE GREAT GREEK PREACHERS

THERE is a century between the Apologists and the great Greek and Latin preachers. The preachers of the East, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa and Chrysostom, finished their work about the same time that the Emperor Theodosius died, leaving the Empire to be divided into East and West between his two sons, Honorius and Arcadius. The preachers of the West, Ambrose and Augustine, bring us to the fall of Rome and the conquest of North Africa by the Vandals. It was a period of great ferment, moving on in the political realm to the overthrow of the Eternal City and in the church to the victory of orthodoxy. Arius was excommunicated in 321, and in 373 his great antagonist Athanasius died. The latter half of the fourth and the beginning years of the fifth centuries became the golden age of preaching. The sermon as we know it took form. Instead of the homily and the written apology, we have the spoken sermon and the expository address. This period is a bright spot in the history of preaching and there is nothing like it until we come to pre-Reformation and Reformation days. The influences which produced this change may be difficult to trace, but in the main they may be classed under four heads.

First of all, the age of persecution had come to an end. Since the days of Stephen, the first martyr, to the time of Constantine, no Christian had been sure of his

life. The touch of tragedy was always upon the church. The Book of Revelation is eloquent of the costly sacrifices that had already been made. The triumph song is there raised to those who came out of the great tribulation. The Apostolic Fathers faced the fire, the sword, and the lions. Polycarp and Ignatius gave their lives for the faith they professed. The Apologists fought with their backs to the wall. Origen would have been martyred had his mother not hidden his clothes and thus secluded him in the house; and Cyprian, after safeguarding his life by flight, voluntarily sealed his testimony with his blood. Tertullian's words became a proverb — "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." Through persecution the church was purified but often silenced. In Rome it was driven into the catacombs and, during the period when the persecutors were abroad, there could be no general and widespread public preaching, and public assemblies could meet only under the shadow of fear. The catacombs themselves are an abiding testimony to the dangers and difficulties which faced the early church. The earliest inscription in the catacombs belongs to 72 A.D. and the latest to 410, the date of the fall of Rome. There we find the eloquent symbols of the dove, the shepherd, the anchor, the palm, the fish, the harp, the peacock, the phoenix, and the vine. Death and torture faced the church, yet even in the darkness there is revealed a religion not of gloom but of gladness. The inscriptions are simple but full of hope. "Constantia, ever faithful, went to God." "Eternal peace be to thee in Christ, Timothea." "Agape, thou shalt live forever." "Terentianus lives." "Peace to you. Peace to you with holiness." The ebb and flow of persecution opened the door not only for heroism but for cowardice and dishonor. The

Apologists themselves had to contend against those who betrayed the Gospel and brought dishonor upon the church. The story of Julian the Apostate and the conditions which existed at his time is not easy to read. With the cessation of persecution, however, congregational life made rapid progress and preaching came into its own.

In the second place, after the Council of Nicæa the faith of the church was faithfully and definitely formulated. The Creed of Nicæa was a fitting conclusion to the long struggle with heresy. Vagueness of doctrine at last crystallized into definite form. Before that statement was formulated the issue was narrowed to the doctrine of the Person of Christ. The controversy of Arianism was fought out not only by Athanasius but by the entire church. The language of the great Catholic creeds may be at times metaphysical, but the doctrine of the Person of Christ was so clearly defined that the church knew where it stood. There were good and great men in those days who did not like the subtlety of the language used. Eusebius although subscribing to the formula did not like it and said so. The work of Athanasius, scholar and preacher, was crowned with success and points to the conclusion that there can be no great preaching until the preacher himself has a consistent Christian theology.

The history of preaching makes this evident. Perhaps the greatest of American preachers was Horace Bushnell, and among preachers he is most worthy of study. He was a pathfinder in the realm of Christian education and beat out his theological position on the anvil of scholarship and experience. Awaking in the night, his wife heard him say, "I have found it! I have found it!" "What have you found?" she asked. "I

have found the Gospel," he replied. He had been tossed upon a stormy sea of doubt and at last had come to a conviction that stirred his heart and opened his mouth on behalf of the everlasting Gospel. The preaching of Dr. Robert W. Dale, one of the greatest of English preachers, was theological in the best sense. His volume of sermons, *Christian Doctrine*, is full of theology. In the Preface he says that shortly after he left college he met a neighboring Congregational minister whose sermons were greatly appreciated in the community for their humor and passion. He was a Welshman and had many qualities belonging to the great preachers of Wales. He said, "I hear that you are preaching doctrinal sermons to the congregation at Carr's Lane; they will not stand it." Dale replied, "They will have to stand it." He confessed later that there was too much of the self-confidence of youth in his reply, yet he believed that his first conception of preaching was right. It was fully justified by the great ministry which followed and which made Carr's Lane church one of the preaching centers of the English-speaking world. Following the formulation of the creed came general agreement upon the canon of the Scripture of the Old and New Testament as set forth by the Synod of Rome 382 and the Synod of Carthage 393. These standards of the faith of the church gave the preachers of that day confidence and authority.

The third great fact affecting the preaching of the church in this age of preaching was the influence of Greek rhetoric upon the style and method of address in Christian assemblies. In the Hibbert Lectures of 1888 Prof. Edwin Hatch interpreted this influence with unexcelled clarity. Greek rhetoric had long been practised before it began to influence Christian preaching.

The rhetoricians chose subjects which were often fictitious, sometimes philosophical, sometimes historical, sometimes theological. They moved about from place to place, like itinerant ministers, but frequently had settled residences and gathered their own audiences. They issued invitation cards and sometimes they did their own advertising. "Come and hear me lecture today." Sometimes a messenger would go from door to door, praising the fine discourse to be delivered. The rhetorician wore a special dress, of which our pulpit gown may be a reminder. He sat on a cushioned seat and began his discourse upon a subject chosen by himself or by the audience. He was ready always for any theme and could talk on any subject. Sometimes he repeated what he had learned by heart as if it were all extemporaneous. He lived upon applause. If there was no response either by hand or word, eloquence died upon his lips. A serious-looking audience disconcerted him. He craved a clapping and shouting response. He welcomed the cries of "Bravo," "Wonderful," "Inspired," "Divine," "Unapproachable." People clapped their hands, stamped their feet, waved their hands. "I want your praise," said a rhetorician to Epictetus. "What do you mean by praise?" "I want you to say 'Bravo' and 'Wonderful.'" After the discourse the speaker sought out his hearers. "What did you think of me today?" "Upon my life, sir, I thought you were admirable." The rhetoricians, like some preachers, had a tendency to overestimate their audiences. "A much larger audience today, I think," says the orator. "Yes, much larger. Five hundred I would guess." "Oh, nonsense. It could not have been less than a thousand."

They made money. They were accorded a distin-

guished place in society. Their advice was sought in matters of state. They were released from taxation. They had statues erected to them, sometimes while still alive. Yet they were out of touch with life. They and their themes were unreal. They were in love with words, not with truth. Their eloquence was a veneer. Nevertheless, it was Greek rhetoric, according to Hatch, which created the Christian sermon. On the whole it was a doubtful influence. "It added," he said, "to the functions of church officers a function which is neither that of the exercise of discipline, nor of administration of the funds, nor of taking the lead in public worship, nor of the simple tradition of received truths, but that of either such an exegesis of the sacred books as the Sophists gave of Homer, or such elaborated discourses as they also gave upon the speculative and ethical aspects of religion. The result was more far-reaching than the creation of either an institution or a function. If you look more closely into history, you will find that Rhetoric killed Philosophy. Philosophy died, because for all but a small minority it ceased to be real. It passed from the sphere of thought and conduct to that of exposition and literature. Its preachers preached, not because they were bursting with truths which could not help finding expression, but because they were masters of fine phrases and lived in an age in which fine phrases had a value. It died, in short, because it had become sophistry."¹ Sophistry is never far removed from those whose task it is to persuade. That is why, in his discourse on preaching, Augustine disclaimed all pretensions to rhetoric, holding that "as the soul is of more importance than the body, so are

¹ *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church*, page 113.

ideas more important than words. This will teach them that they have to be just as keen on hearing truth-telling sermons rather than eloquent ones, as they prefer to have friends who are prudent rather than beautiful. They must be made to understand that it is not the voice which reaches the ears of God but the heart's affections."¹

In the fourth place, it is worthy of note that the great Greek and Latin preachers were personalities of a high order. They were the sons of well-to-do parents who were devoted to the Christian faith and who had the will and the means to send them to the best schools of their day and give them the fullest preparation for their life work. The father of Basil was a renowned rhetorician, his mother a saintly Christian. In the home there were four brilliant sons and five daughters, all of whom were devoted to Christianity. One of the sons became an eminent jurist. One of the daughters, Marcrina, and three of the sons, Basil, Gregory of Nyssa and Peter of Sebaste, have been canonized by the Orthodox church. Basil was educated in Cæsarea, Alexandria and Athens. His brother Gregory became a capable scholar under the guidance of his father. Nonna, the mother of Gregory of Nazianzus, the devoted friend of Basil, was a woman of great distinction. It was said of her that "when she was engaged in holy services no one could have thought she had a single care. When she was occupied with household duties no one would have guessed her profound piety." When Gregory was born she took him to the church and, placing his baby hands on the open Bible, dedicated him to God. He, too, was given the best education money could buy. He was a close and intimate friend of

¹ *On Catechising the Uninstructed.*

Basil and for five years as students they studied together in Athens. "We knew only two streets of the city," wrote Gregory, "the first and the more excellent one to the churches, and to the ministers of the altar; the other, which, however, we did not so highly esteem, to the public schools and to the teachers of the sciences. The streets to the theatres, games, and places of unholy amusements, we left to others. Our holiness was our great concern; our sole aim was to be called and to be Christians. In this we placed our whole glory."¹

Chrysostom, too, came from a home of social position and refinement. His father died when he was a child and his mother, Anthusa, a widow at twenty, devoted her whole life to preparing him for the Gospel ministry. Wooed by wealthy suitors of noble birth, she refused to be drawn aside from the task to which she had devoted her life. Said Libanus, the eminent rhetorician, "Heavens, what women these Christians have." Chrysostom received his training in the classic tradition and in rhetoric showing such brilliance even in his youth that when asked as to his best pupil and his possible successor, Libanus said, "Chrysostom, if the Christians had not stolen him."

The story of Augustine and his mother's prayers for him belongs to the classics in literature. When Sir James M. Barrie addressed the students of the University of St. Andrew's he spoke of "the poor proud homes" from which many of them came. Some of the world's greatest preachers have come from "poor proud homes." They endured seeing the invisible. High thinking and plain living were their inheritance. On the other hand, men like Basil and Gregory and

¹ 43rd Oration.

Chrysostom and Phillips Brooks and many of our distinguished preachers came from homes of affluence. Is it too much to expect that from our Christian homes, where culture and opportunity are the inheritance of children, there will come forth in greater numbers young men born to leadership who will find in the Gospel ministry their highest joy? The church has been remiss in its duty in selecting its own ministry. Too often it has depended upon the individual and inner call to which young men respond, forgetting that there is also a call which comes from the church itself. In the beginning days, when it was necessary to enlarge the ministry of the church, the Apostles said to the brethren, "Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom." The Apostles evidently expected to make a choice of the personnel needed, recognizing the evident fact that the church itself is responsible for choosing its own leadership.

Out of this situation created by a new order, a marvellous change came over Christian preaching. The names of Athanasius, Arius, Basil, the two Gregorys, Chrysostom are immortal. There are doubtless many who were great in their day who have left no memorial. There are others, like Asterius, bishop of Amasia, whose names linger in history. The sermons by Asterius have more than a passing interest. They excel in style. As a rule, they are based on Scripture and contain from three to five thousand words. Asterius apparently preached against all forms of luxury and display, against intemperance, immorality, covetousness, and divorce. The painting of scenes from the life of Christ on wearing apparel he deploras: "Do not picture Christ on your garments. . . . Not upon your

robes but upon your soul carry about his image.”¹ There is, however, a noticeable absence of doctrine, of evangelical truth, of what has been called the *kerygma*, although it is everywhere taken for granted.

The names of Basil, Gregory, and Chrysostom, however, shine with a clear lustre. Basil, together with his friend Gregory Nazianzen, had been drawn into the solitude of monastic life, and something prophetic in the mastery of style is revealed in Basil's letter from his wooded mountain retreat in Pontus.

“ God [he writes] has shown me a spot which exactly suits my taste, so that I have seen in reality just such a place as I often imagined for myself in the dreams of idle fancy. It is a lofty mountain, overshadowed with a deep wood, irrigated on the north by cold and transparent streams. At its foot is spread a low plain, enriched perpetually with the streams from the mountains. The wood, a virgin forest of trees of various kinds and foliage which grows around it, almost serves it as a rampart; so that even the Isle of Calypso, which Homer evidently admired as a paragon of loveliness, is nothing in comparison with this. For indeed it is very nearly an island, from its being enclosed on all sides with rocky boundaries. On two sides of it are deep and precipitous ravines, and on another side the river flowing from the steep is itself a continuous and almost impassable barrier. The mountain range with its moon-shaped windings, walls off the accessible parts of the plain. There is but one entrance, of which we are the masters. . . .

“ Why need I tell you of the sweet exhalations from the earth, or the breezes from the river? Other persons might admire the multitude of the flowers, or of the lyric birds, but I have no time to attend to them. But my highest eulogy of the spot is that, prolific as it is of all kinds of fruits from

¹ *Ancient Sermons for Modern Times* (Translated from the Greek by Galusha Anderson and Edgar J. Goodspeed), page 25.

its happy situation, it bears for me the sweetest of all fruits—tranquillity; not only because it is free from the noises of cities, but because it is not traversed by a single visitor except the hunters, who occasionally join us.”¹

A man who can write like that will some day find his voice, and Basil did, for while he confessed to finding tranquillity in nature he was unable to discover it within himself. In time he was chosen bishop of Cæsarea, a responsibility which he unwillingly undertook, and soon the cares of administration crowded upon him. He labored to keep the church pure and free from immorality, so common around him, and devoted himself without reserve to the care of his people and the fifty bishops under him.

Basil was a man of many talents. He left his impress upon monasticism, substituting hand labor and works of charity for the asceticism and hermit life. The hospitals he established became known as Basilicas. He improved the worship of the church, and the liturgy of St. Basil is still used in the Eastern church. His life was lived in Cappadocia, a region notorious for its evil ways. The Cappadocians had such a bad reputation that there was a saying to the effect that a viper once bit a Cappadocian and the viper died. Basil became an eloquent and practical preacher, a follower of the allegorical method of Origen and in touch with contemporary affairs. His homilies and sermons bear the stamp of a man of passionate eloquence and moral courage. His sermon on the evils of intemperance could be used today. “Sorrowful sight for Christian eyes! A man in the prime of life, of powerful frame, of high rank in the army, is carried furtively

¹ *Epistle XIV.*

home, because he cannot stand upright, and travel on his own feet. A man who ought to be a terror to our enemies is a laughing-stock to the lads in the streets. He is smitten down by no sword—slain by no foe. A military man, in the bloom of manhood, the prey of wine, and ready to suffer any fate his foes may choose! Drunkenness is the ruin of reason, the destruction of strength; it is untimely old age; it is, for a short time, death.”¹ His sermon on stewardship strikes a modern note. “Art thou a niggard in thy expenses, when thou art destined to attain glory so great? God will welcome thee, angels will laud thee, mankind from the very beginning will call thee blessed. For thy stewardship of these corruptible things thy reward shall be glory everlasting, a crown of righteousness, the heavenly kingdom. Thou thinkest nothing of all this. Thy heart is so fixed on the present that thou despisest what is waited for in hope. Come then; dispose of thy wealth in various directions. Be generous and liberal in thy expenditure on the poor. Let it be said of thee, ‘He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever.’”²

Simple in his own tastes and economical in his habits, he cried out against the coarsening luxury of the people among whom his lot was cast. In one of his sermons he said:

“I am filled with amazement at the invention of superfluities. The vehicles are countless, some for conveying goods, others for carrying their owners; all covered with brass and with silver. There are a vast number of horses, whose pedigrees are kept like men’s, and their descent from noble sires recorded. Some are for carrying their haughty owners about the town, some are hunters, some are hacks. Bits,

¹ *Homily XIV.*

² *Homily VI.*

girths, collars, are all of silver, all decked with gold. Scarlet cloths make the horses as gay as bridegrooms. There is a host of mules, distinguished by their colours, and their muleteers with them, one after another, some before and some behind. Of other household servants the number is endless, who satisfy all the requirements of men's extravagance; agents, stewards, gardeners, and craftsmen, skilled in every art that can minister to necessity or to enjoyment and luxury; cooks, confectioners, butlers, huntsmen, sculptors, painters, devisers and creators of pleasure of every kind. Look at the herds of camels, some for carriage, some for pasture; troops of horses, droves of oxen, flocks of sheep, herds of swine, with their keepers, land to feed all these, and to increase men's riches by its produce; baths in town, baths in the country; houses shining all over with every variety of marble,—some with stone of Phrygia, others with slabs of Sparta or Thessaly. There must be some houses warm in winter, and others cool in summer. The pavement is of mosaic, the ceiling gilded. If any part of the wall escapes the slabs, it is embellished with painted flowers. . . .

“You who dress your walls, and let your fellow creatures go bare, what will you answer to the Judge? You who harness your horses with splendour, and despise your brother if he is ill-dressed; who let your wheat rot, and will not feed the hungry; who hide your gold, and despise the distressed?

“And, if you have a wealth-loving wife, the plague is twice as bad. She keeps your luxury ablaze; she increases your love of pleasure; she gives the goad to your superfluous appetites; her heart is set on stones,—pearls, emeralds, and sapphires. Gold she works and gold she weaves, and increases the mischief with never-ending frivolities. And her interest in all these things is no mere byplay: it is the care of night and day. Then what innumerable flatterers wait upon their idle wants! They must have their dyers of bright colours, their goldsmiths, their perfumers, their weavers, their embroiderers. With all their behests they do not leave their husbands breathing time. No fortune is vast enough to

satisfy a woman's wants,—no, not if it were to flow like a river! They are as eager for foreign perfumes as for oil from the market. They must have the treasures of the sea, shells and pinnas, and more of them than wool from the sheep's back. Gold encircling precious stones serves now for an ornament for their foreheads, now for their necks. There is more gold in their girdles; more gold fastens hands and feet. These gold-loving ladies are delighted to be bound by golden fetters,—only let the chain be gold! When will the man have time to care for his soul, who has to serve a woman's fancies? ”¹

In a day when bishops were tempted to play politics, Basil kept the bishop's staff aloft, even in the presence of the emperor's sceptre. When the Emperor Valens sought to re-establish Arianism within the jurisdiction of Basil he sent his emissary Modestus to compel the compliance of the bishop. “What do you mean by so daring a defiance of such great power?” asked Modestus. “Do you not fear my power?” Basil replied, “Why should I fear it, what can happen to me?” “What? any one of the many things which are in my power,” said Modestus. “As for instance?” asked Basil. “Confiscation, banishment, tortures, death?” replied the prefect. “Is that all?” said Basil. “None of those things affects me. He who has nothing is not liable to confiscation, unless you want to seize these worn and threadbare clothes and a few books which constitute my entire possessions. Banishment? I know nothing of it. I am confined to no spot. The land which I now inhabit is not mine, and any land into which I may be cast forth is all mine, or rather is all God's, in which I am but a stranger and a pilgrim. Tortures? I have no body to torture, except perhaps

¹ *Homily VII.*

for a single stroke, for that alone is in your power. And as for death, death is a benefactor, for it will send me all the sooner to God, to whom I live and whom I serve.”¹ The courage and the audacity of the bishop overawed the royal ambassador, who returned to his master saying, “Emperor, we have been worsted by the bishop of this church. He is superior to threats, too firm for arguments, too strong for persuasion.”² The Emperor in the end acknowledged the mastery of the man of God.

Gregory Nazianzen and Basil were lifelong friends. They practised the monastic life together. They studied side by side at Athens and, although by an act of authority in appointing Gregory to the obscure see their friendship was for a while strained, they were beautiful in their lives and in their death they were not divided. Gregory was superior to Basil and to his brother Gregory of Nyssa as an orator. There was a touch of charm about him. He was something of a poet, a lover of nature, with a genius for friendship. Like Timothy, he had known the Holy Scriptures from his youth. His mother, Nonna, was a woman of saintly character and intellectual culture. His father was Bishop of Nazianzus, who guided his education with the greatest care. He was consecrated bishop and Basil appointed him to Sasima, a poor place at a point where four roads crossed. Gregory was offended at his friend's seeming depreciation of him and it is doubtful that he ever visited the church he was appointed to serve. Instead he took up residence as his father's assistant at Nazianzus. He was called by the orthodox party to Constantinople, where his success became immediate. His five sermons on the Trinity gave him the

¹ *Oration XLIII.*

² *Ibid.*

name of *theologus*. With the coming of the orthodox emperor Theodosius, he was consecrated Bishop of Constantinople, but when his appointment was opposed by jealous rivals, he resigned and lived the rest of his life in retirement.

He was a preacher of great passion and persuasive eloquence. When his father died at the age of almost a hundred, after he had served the church for forty-five years, Gregory himself delivered the funeral sermon in the presence of a great congregation, his mother and Basil being present.

“There is only one life, to behold the (divine) life; there is only one death—sin; for this is the corruption of the soul. But all else, for the sake of which many exert themselves, is a dream which decoys us from the true; it is a treacherous phantom of the soul. When we think so, O my mother, then we shall not boast of life, nor dread death. For whatsoever evil we yet endure, if we press out of it to true life, if we, delivered from every change, from every vortex, from all satiety, from all vassalage to evil, shall there be with eternal, no longer changeable things, as small lights circling around the great.”¹

The power of emotion under control, which alone makes great preaching, is clearly evident in the letter Gregory Nazianzen wrote when Basil his lifelong friend died:

“You ask how it fares with me. Very badly. I no longer have Basil; I no longer have Cæsarius, my spiritual brother, and my bodily brother. I can say with David, my father and my mother have forsaken me. My body is sickly, age is coming over my head, cares become more and more complicated, duties overwhelm me, friends are unfaithful, the

¹ *Oration XVIII.*

church is without capable pastors, good declines, evil stalks naked. The ship is going in the night, a light nowhere, Christ asleep. What is to be done? O, there is to me but one escape from this evil case: death. But the hereafter would be terrible to me, if I had to judge of it by the present state.”¹

Gregory was then forty-nine and little knew that there would immediately follow him the greatest preacher since the days of the Apostles.

The power of Gregory's preaching was immediately recognized. The church in Constantinople, which had dwindled to a handful until worship was held in a private house, responded like an awakening from the dead. Indeed, that was what it was, and Gregory called the new church, which arose under his ministry, Anastasia—the Church of the Resurrection. It was a miracle that we sometimes see wrought by the power of God using the personality of a man. The personality of Gregory was, however, in outward appearance far from prepossessing. He was short, meagre, sickly, prematurely aged. He was pale, with a low nose, straight eyebrows, and dense but short beard. He came to the capital in apparent weakness but in the power of the Spirit. He taught the people purity of doctrine and purity of life. He was gentle in his condemnations and fair in his arguments. He endured ridicule and suffered persecution. But he pursued his way. The community was rent with acrimonious controversy but Gregory preached peace. It was customary for the preacher to begin his sermon with the words “Peace to all” and for the people to respond, “And to thy Spirit.” That is a custom to be commended. “We

¹ Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. III, page 917.

worship Him who is Love," said Gregory, "why do we hate one another? We who preach peace, why do we wage war? . . . Our discords are the triumphs of the enemy, our tragedies are their comedies."¹

Gregory's sermons were topical rather than textual. They have something of the pomp of Grecian rhetoric. The language is often both eloquent and extravagant. Next to Chrysostom he was, nevertheless, the church's greatest orator. Of his forty-five orations, five are on moral subjects, six on festivals, nine controversial, five on the Trinity, four funeral, four eulogies, sixteen occasional. When the time came to say farewell to his congregation, because of the pressure of the opposition, he concluded his ministry with these noble words:

"Farewell, Anastasia . . . and thou great and venerable temple, and all ye other churches which approach it in splendour and beauty! Farewell, apostles, the leaders of my conflicts! Farewell, my seat as a bishop, thou dangerous and envied throne! Farewell, assemblies of bishops! . . . Farewell, the choir of Nazarites! . . . Modest virgins, grave matrons, crowds of widows and orphans, eyes of the poor always intent upon God and upon us! Farewell, hospitable houses, lovers of Christ, and helpers of my infirmities! Farewell, ye lovers of my sermons, ye crowds that throng to the church, ye shorthand writers, open and secret, and these rails so often pressed upon by eager auditors! Farewell, Emperors, with your courts and courtiers, whether faithful to the Emperor or not I cannot tell, but for the most part faithless to God! Clap your hands and with shrill voice cry out, exalt your orator! The busy and insolent tongue (as you account it) has sunk to silence, but shall not be always silent, but shall fight against you with hand and ink. But for the present we are silent. Farewell, oh great and

¹ *Orations* XXII-XXIII.

Christ-loving state, for I will witness to the truth even though your zeal be not according to knowledge! My separation has made me more kindly towards you. Come to the truth; change yourselves even though it be late. Honour God more than has been your wont. . . . Farewell, East and West, for whom and by whom we are being opposed! He is my witness who will give you peace, if but a few should imitate my retirement. Those who give up thrones will not also lose God, but will have the seat in heaven which is far loftier and safer than these. Farewell, ye angels who preside over this church, and over my presence and my departure, if my fortunes be in the hand of God! Farewell, O Trinity, my meditation and my glory! May it be ever told me that Thou art being exalted and uplifted both in word and in conversation. My children, keep, I pray you, the deposit; remember my stonings. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”¹

There was no bitterness, no spirit of animosity. From his retirement, however, he refused to be drawn. “He was tired of fighting against envy and venerable bishops who put their personal squabbles before questions of faith.” He would never, he said, attend another synod of the clergy, whose discussions reminded him of the cackling of geese and cranes.

The effect of his preaching he himself has disclosed in the form of a vision. The evening congregation had assembled in the church of Anastasia which was brilliantly lighted. He describes himself seated on the bishop’s throne, but seated there in all humility; the elders and chief members of the congregation are ranged a little below him; the deacons and other church helpers looking like angels in their white robes; the people, like a swarm of bees, struggling with each other

¹ *Oration XLII.*

to get the places nearest to the chancel, and even clinging to its holy gates; others thronging to hear him from the streets and markets; the holy virgins and noble women listening with deep attention in their seats in the gallery; the eyes of all fixed upon him in expectation that he would preach now a simple and practical, now a profound and theological sermon: and how with powerful voice and fiery soul he kept preaching to them nothing but the doctrine of the Trinity, while some stormed, and some fretted, and some openly opposed, and some were sunk in deep meditation, and the whole congregation resembled a tumultuous sea, until his words began to work upon them, and "he called across the tumult, and the tumult fell."¹

The greatest of all the Greek preachers and one of the greatest of preachers in history was John, better known as Chrysostom of "the golden mouth." He was the ideal preacher for a great city, first at Antioch and later at Constantinople. His name is immortal. His well-known prayer of invocation is used by the people of every land. "Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen." He is pre-eminently the preacher. He was not a great theologian or scholar, but is supreme as an expository preacher, a pastor, a man of God, a loyal churchman.

His life was lived in the white light of publicity. His father was a military officer of high rank; his mother, Anthusa, a woman of great charm and spiritual insight. He was trained for the legal profession but at

¹ *Carmina*, XVI.

an early age gave everything he had to Christ. A friend of Basil, he, too, was drawn to the monastic life and for ten years led a life of asceticism and study but withdrew from it because of the tearful entreaties of his mother. Apparently consenting to be ordained with Basil as a bishop, he hid himself, permitting his friend to go forward with his own ordination, and afterwards "laughed with delight" that he had jilted his superiors and justified his deception. Those were days when men accepted ordination reluctantly and were often unexpectedly forced to accept the high office of bishop as a surprise suddenly sprung upon them. He became Bishop of Antioch at the age of forty-one and twelve years later he was kidnapped and taken to Constantinople, where for five years he had phenomenal success as a preacher and administrator. Because of his courage and perhaps his lack of tact he was exiled, only to return, to the delight of his people, but finally was expelled by the synod to the wild region of Mt. Taurus in Asia Minor, where, after three years of suffering hardship, exposure, and harsh treatment, he died at the age of sixty-two.

We are interested in Chrysostom as a preacher, and the homilies, sermons, and expositions which have been preserved enable us to make an estimate of his pulpit methods and his unusual eloquence. He was tremendously influenced by Greek rhetoric. From early youth, speaking left a good taste in his mouth. He was never blind to his own power over the minds of men. His long acquaintance with solitude had given him intimate knowledge of his own heart and consequently of the hearts of all men. His service as a deacon had brought him into touch with the personal problems of ordinary folk so that his preaching was always in touch

with reality. His experience as a pastor prepared him, as it does any man, for preaching.

Chrysostom loved to preach. He preached usually twice a week, sometimes oftener. He made careful preparation, sometimes speaking extempore, sometimes reading his sermons. Every man must find his own method. Phillips Brooks was a close reader and at times a poor one, but he was among America's first preachers. Jonathan Edwards read his sermons with his head down and his eyes glued to his manuscript. When the great preacher George Whitefield failed to appear, Jonathan Edwards was pressed into service and the record reads:

“Edwards, unknown to most in person, with unfeigned reluctance, such as a vainer man might feel, rose before a disappointed assembly and proceeded with feeble manner to read from his manuscript. In a little time the audience was hushed; but this was not all. Before they were aware, they were attentive and soon enchained. As was then common, one and another in the outskirts would arise and stand; numbers arose and stood; they came forward, they passed upon the centre; the whole assembly rose; and before he concluded, sobs burst from the convulsed throng. It was the power of fearful argument.”¹

This was the preaching of compelling conviction. It was characteristic of Peter's sermon and it is not conceivable that he read it. Yesterday he was hesitant, timid, shrinking from criticism, but now under the influence of the Spirit of God he was on fire. “The issues of life and death,” said Ruskin, “are in the pulpit.” The man who believes that cannot preach as if nothing mattered.

¹ Dwight, *Life and Works of Edwards*, Vol. I.

No one but a master could ride the fast flowing currents of that age and yet Chrysostom was not a man of commanding appearance. He spoke of himself as "spiderlike." He was not very tall; he had a high forehead, keen eyes, and an emaciated and worn countenance. Yet he commanded every occasion. It was not easy to preach in those days. People were restless and the congregation seemed always on the move. Crowds thronged the services, so much so that the preacher warned the people that pickpockets were at work. The audience frequently broke out into tumultuous applause. Some left before or in the midst of the sermon. Some gossiped at the back of the church, which was reserved for pagans and the unbaptized. Women fussed with their children and chattered about their domestic affairs. Chrysostom, however, needed no applause. "If you will applaud," he said, "do it in the market or when you hear the harpers and actors: the church is no theatre." His warning was of no avail. The rhetoricians wanted applause and the people were accustomed to it. "You praise my words," he said, "and greet my exhortations with loud applause. But show your approval by obedience—that is the praise I want, the applause of your good deeds."

Chrysostom was what we would call a Bible preacher. He was essentially an expository preacher. He was like Matthew Henry, whose sermons now constitute his immortal commentary. He expounded for his people the books of Genesis, the Psalms, the Gospels of Matthew and John, the Book of the Acts, the Epistles of St. Paul and Hebrews. There are sixty-seven homilies on Genesis, ninety on Matthew, thirty-three on Romans, seventy-four on Corinthians, twenty-four on Hebrews, eleven on Ephesians, six on the first verse of

Galatians, fifteen on Philipians, twelve on Colossians, sixteen on First and Second Thessalonians. Sometimes he emphasizes what we overlook today and sometimes, as in the case of the great invitation, "Come unto me," he completely overlooks what we treasure. Six hundred of his homilies have been preserved, some of two thousand words and others of seven thousand words. They begin reverently and usually close, as sermons ought to close, with an ascription of praise: "To whom be glory and might, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost now and always, even for ever and ever. Amen." In his expositions he moved away from the allegorical method and dedicated himself to what today we would call the critical approach. "Types," he said, "could be invented more easily than texts could be investigated." He had the sure touch of the exegete. "We must not press the parables to every detail of expression," he said, "otherwise many are the absurdities that will follow. The drift of a parable must be seized: curiosity must ask no more."

There is a difference between preaching and lecturing, and Chrysostom was always and everywhere the preacher. He faced up to people. He spoke not to problems but to people. He was not afraid of sentiment. His second sermon at Antioch began, "I have addressed you only on one day and from that day I have loved you as much as if I had been brought up among you." He spoke often from the ambo or pulpit, but frequently came down to the reader's desk among the people. Cardinal Newman says, "He spoke because his heart, his head, was brimful of things to speak about." He was never far away from common life and common people. "I treat of so many things," he said, "in each of my sermons and make them so

varied because I want everybody to find something special for himself in it and not to go home empty-handed." He had a vivid imagination and often people caught themselves wondering how much he knew. "Don't be frightened," he calls out. "I am not going to name any names." He is never afraid of being unconventional. "Please listen to me—you are not paying attention. I am talking to you about the Holy Scriptures and you are looking at the lamps and the people who are lighting them. It is very frivolous to be more interested in what the lamplighters are doing than in what the preacher is saying." And then he adds the telling words, "After all I, too, am lighting a lamp, the lamp of God's Word." The people might forget the sermon but not the admonition.

One thing more, Chrysostom was a contemporary preacher. Like the messages of Isaiah and Jeremiah and Amos and all the prophetic preachers, his sermons were related to the people and to the time in which he himself lived. Indeed, his sermons cannot be understood apart from the history that was taking place about him. Perhaps his greatest preaching is recorded in the so-called Statue Sermons preached in Antioch after a riot which mutilated and destroyed the statues of the emperor and his wife. The aged Bishop Flavian had gone overland a distance of eight hundred miles in midwinter to plead with Theodosius for mercy. It is a story of great heroic and romantic interest. While the people waited, anticipating the judgment, Chrysostom preached to them, warning, comforting, calling them to repentance.

The news of a full pardon came on Easter Day and Chrysostom's prayers were answered. The days of waiting had seen great sights. It was a time of spiritual

revival. Paganism was driven from the streets. The churches were thronged. The Spirit of Christ had triumphed and Chrysostom's faith had been vindicated. In his joy that Easter Day, he exclaimed:

“Blessed be God, through whose goodness we celebrate this holy feast with such gladness and rejoicing; He has restored the head to the body, the shepherd to the sheep, the master to his disciples, the high priest to the clergy. Blessed be God, who has done for us far more than we asked or hoped for. . . . He has sent our father back to us sooner than we expected; he, our beloved hierarch, is unharmed by the hardships of his winter journeyings, and he finds his sister, whom he left near death, alive to welcome his return. . . . Let us, then, always give thanks to God, the lover of man, both for our present safety and for the danger He allowed, since we know that He orders all things for our good; we learn from the Holy Scriptures, as well as from what has befallen us, that His loving kindness overrules all that happens, turning it to our profit. May we always receive His mercy in this world, and come at last to the kingdom of Heaven through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”¹

He was a preacher of the Social Gospel. To the poor he said, “Weep with me!—but not for yourselves: rather for those who rob you, who are in worse case than you are.”² To the rich, “You say you have inherited your fortune. Well and good; you have not sinned yourselves. But are you sure you are not benefiting from the previous crimes and thefts of others?”³ In the same sermon he says, “When your body is laid in the ground the memory of your ambi-

¹ *Concerning the Statues*, Homily XXI.

² *On II Corinthians*, Homily XXXIV.

³ *On I Timothy*, Homily XII.

tion will not be buried with you, for each passerby as he looks at your great house will say to himself or to his neighbour, 'What tears went to the building of that house! How many orphans were left naked by it, how many widows wronged, how many workmen cheated out of their wages!' . . . You want to cut a fine figure in life—and your accusers will pursue you even after you are dead."¹ Again, he says, "When you put a gold bit on your horse and a gold bracelet on your slave's arm, when your clothes are gilded down to your very shoes, you are feeding the most ferocious of all beasts, avarice."² There is passion and eloquence in his appeal. "I am going to say something terrible, but I must say it. Treat God as you do your slaves. You bequeath them freedom in your will: then free Christ from hunger, want, prison, nakedness!"³ "Don't envy the man whom you see riding through the streets with a troop of attendants to drive the crowds out of his way. It is absurd! Why, my dear sir, if I may ask, do you thus drive your fellow creatures before you? Are you a wolf or a lion? Your Lord, Jesus Christ, raised man to Heaven."⁴ He was under no illusion as to his problem. He spoke of his work as that of a man trying to clean a piece of ground into which a muddy stream was constantly flowing. He was true to the teaching of Jesus when he said, "I am often reprov'd for always attacking the rich. Of course I do, for they are always attacking the poor—and anyhow I never attack the rich as such, but only those who misuse their wealth. I keep on pointing out that I accuse not the rich but the avaricious:

¹ *On the Psalms*, Homily XLVII.

² *On the Psalms*, Homily XLVIII.

³ *On Romans*, Homily XVIII.

⁴ *On the Psalms*, Homily XLVIII.

wealth is one thing, avarice quite another. Learn to distinguish things and not to confuse together what ought not to be confused.”¹

He demanded always and from every one purity of life. “The fact that you have a father or a son or anybody else whose trust is in God will not save you if you are betrayed by your own deeds; God judges solely by what you have done, and you can be saved only by your own good actions. I do not say this to bring you to despair, but simply to impress on you that we cannot afford to neglect personal goodness on the ground of some worthless hope or through trust in this person or that. If we shall be found to have been idle and careless, then no saint or prophet or even one of the apostles themselves will be able to save us.”² He spoke out defiantly against the heathen customs that had laid hold upon Christian women. This was a common theme and we find it again and again referred to in Tertullian, Ambrose, and Augustine. “If thou shouldest fashion well the form of this soul, thou wilt not see the countenance of the body looking unseemly, nor lips stained, nor a mouth like a bear’s mouth dyed with blood, nor eyebrows blackened as with the smut of some kitchen vessel, nor cheeks whitened with dust like the walls of the tombs. For all these things are smut, and cinders, and dust, and signals of extreme deformity.”³ He asks them why they disfigure their faces, which God gave them, for in doing so they dishonor God and at the same time they seek to deceive their friends. He tells them that the colored shoes they are wearing would look better on their heads.

¹ *On the Fall of Eutropius*, Homily II.

² *On I Corinthians*, Homily XLII.

³ Homilies on Matthew, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. X, page 204.

“Let go this adorning, or rather disfiguring, cultivate that beauty in your own souls which is lovely even to angels, and desired of God, and delightful to your husbands; that ye may attain both unto present glory, and unto that which is to come.”¹ It is all very modern but the preacher who today would speak thus plainly would be in danger of the judgment!

It has been said that the way to preach is to take a text and then say something interesting about it. That was what Chrysostom did. He was always interesting. “Seest thou not the painters, how much they rub out, how they insert, when they are making a beautiful portrait? Well, then, do not thou prove inferior to these.”² He preached with a purpose. “How,” he said, “am I going to find out if you are getting any good from me? When I think I see some among you who are not attentive I shall come and question them privately. If I find that they remember something—I do not say all—but something of what I have said I shall no longer suspect them. It would be better had I not warned you . . . but I can still take you by surprise, for I have not said *when* I shall question you! . . . Like death, you will not know when I am coming!”³ There is a touch of authority here and it was this same quality that led, in the end, to antagonism. He was accustomed to magnify his office. “So long as we sit on the throne, so long as we hold the prelacy, we have both the dignity and the power though we are unworthy. We are God’s ambassadors; if this offends you, it is not we but the episcopate.”⁴ Above everything else that interested people they were interested in

¹ Homilies on Matthew, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. X, pages 204-205.

² *Ibid.*, page 204.

⁴ *Homilies* III, IV.

³ *On Hebrews*, Homily IV.

him. Truth came to them through the medium of a high tension personality. He himself was the Gospel's best apologetic. He had an aversion to luxury, a distaste for display. He was never at home in the society of the capital. "The stunted, shrivelled figure, the bald head, the homely dress, would have been like a skeleton at the feast in those grand chambers where, in his absence, he would be the topic of the hour."¹ He did no entertaining. He ate his meals alone. He disciplined his clergy. He was not always easy to live with, but he kept loyal to his task to the end. His last words were, "Glory to God for all things. Amen." Before he was compelled to close his ministry he said, "Christ is with me; what then have I to fear? The floods of the sea and the rage of the princes of this world put together can do me no more harm than a spider's web. . . . If it be God's will that this thing should happen, let it happen. If it be His will that I should remain here, all thanks be to Him. I thank Him in whatever place He wills me to be."² No better word could be on the lips of the preacher in his success and in his failures. "I thank Him in whatever place He wills me to be. Glory be to God for all things. Amen."

There is something further that may be said before this study of these great Greek preachers is concluded. While it is true that God can make use of weakness, He can make greater use of strength. "If a straw," says Emerson, "be held still in the direction of the ocean current, the sea will pour through it as through Gibraltar."³ That is quite true, but the current flows

¹ William Bright, *Lessons from the Lives of Three Great Fathers*, page 70.

² Attwater, *St. John Chrysostom*, page 126.

³ *Lectures and Biographical Sketches*, page 74.

with greater force and more effectually through Gibraltar than through a straw. The great Greek preachers were channels through which the power of God flowed in strength. They were strong men. They endured seeing the invisible. It was said of Gladstone that he would have succeeded had he been put down empty-handed in the middle of a moor. Such a thing could be said of Basil and Gregory and Chrysostom. They were men of quality. In speaking of Chrysostom, Father Bull, whose book on sermon construction is well worth study, says:

“To name him is to name eloquence itself. Never has anyone united in a higher degree the talents which make the orator. The vigor and sublimity of genius; a prodigious fertility of the imagination, an admirable talent of dialectic; marvelous sagacity in taking advantage of the smallest circumstances; a doctrine, vast and sure; wonderful skill in insulating himself into, and gaining the mastery over, the wills of his hearers. An orator truly popular, he is worthy to be set before all ages as the most perfect model of Christian eloquence, because, on the one hand, one admires in him with a most noble character the higher virtues of a real apostle; on the other hand, he unites to an admirable doctrine the purest taste, and the perfect knowledge of the language in which he writes.”¹

This type of man the Christian ministry should have. The church should claim the best young men, men who would succeed in any profession, in any business. It should hand pick its leaders. The early church did this very thing. Speaking through the church, “the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.”² It was not

¹ *Preaching and Sermon Construction*, page 257.

² Acts 13: 2.

Barnabas and Saul who chose the church, it was the church that laid hands upon Barnabas and Saul. It was so in the Old Testament. The Old Testament exercised selective care over the men who were called to serve at the altar. "No man of the seed of Aaron the priest, that hath a blemish, shall come nigh to offer the offerings of Jehovah made by fire: he hath a blemish; he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God."¹ Interpreting this restriction, Matthew Henry says, "Great men choose to have such servants about them as are sightly, and it was fit that the great God should have such in His house, then when He was pleased to manifest His glory in external indications of it. But it was especially requisite that comely men should be chosen to minister about holy things, for the sake of the people, who were apt to judge according to outward appearance, and to think meanly of the service, how honourable soever it was made by the divine institution, if those that performed it looked despicably, or went about it awkwardly."² The church needs "comely men," remembering always that comeliness is not restricted to the physically fit, for in the providence of God "there is many a healthful, beautiful soul lodged in a crazy, deformed body." It is manhood the church needs and must have. Strong men, not soft men; men who face the storm, not men who turn their backs to it; men who do their jobs as well as the mechanic does his. "Preaching," says Dr. Jefferson, "is primarily a matter of manhood. The sermon depends on the mass of the man. His character must be massive, or he cannot do the work. One sometimes hears an expression which tells much. 'He is not big

¹ Leviticus 21 : 21.

² *A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, Vol. I, page 310.

enough man for the place.' Is he not educated? Yes. Is he not clever? Very. Bright? Exceedingly. Brilliant? Often. And yet not big enough for the place! The world makes a distinction between a man and his gifts. The Church of God must have the man."¹ It is not possible for every minister to be a Chrysostom or a Beecher or a Spurgeon; but it is possible for every minister to be a man, above all a man of God, faithful and devoted, making as much out of the stuff of life which God has given him as is possible.

Furthermore, the great Greek preachers possessed a sense of abandon. They subordinated their personal wishes and comfort to the cause to which they gave the last full measure of their devotion. It is said that some men live by their work and some live for it. These men lived for their work. They responded freely to the apostolic injunction "to preach the word; keep at it in season and out of season." They endured hardness for the Gospel's sake, counting their lives not dear unto themselves. They knew how to minister the mystery of the Word. They were eloquent but their eloquence was always subservient to their purpose. Fénelon, the distinguished French preacher and archbishop, makes an incisive comparison of the oratory of Cicero and Demosthenes and gives his acclaim to the Greek.

"I do not [he says] fear to say that Demosthenes seems to me superior to Cicero. I protest that no one admires Cicero more than I do. He enriches all that he touches. He does honor to speech. He does with words what no one else could do. He has untold wit. He is at the same time short and vehement and at all times what he wishes to be—against Catiline, against Verres, against Antoine. But one notices a certain dressing up in his discourse. His art is marvelous;

¹ *The Building of the Church*, pages 286-287.

but one perceives it. The orator, though thinking of the safety of the republic, does not forget himself, and does not allow himself to be forgotten. Demosthenes seems to get outside himself, and only to see his fatherland. He does not seek for the beautiful: he creates it without thinking about it. He is above admiration. He clothes himself in words, as a modest man in his attire, to cover himself. He thunders, he lightens! It is a torrent which carries everything away. One cannot criticize, because one is borne along. One thinks of the things which he says and not of his words. One loses sight of them. One is filled with the thought of Philip who invades everything. I am charmed with these two orators; but I confess that I am less touched by the infinite art and magnificent eloquence of Cicero than by the torrential simplicity of Demosthenes.”¹

The Greek preachers had been trained in rhetoric, but the love of the Gospel had transformed the art of Greece and sublimated it to the eloquence which forgot itself in the achievement of its purpose. That purpose was to win recruits to the King of kings, and to train them for the Kingdom. Their diligence and zeal no one can question. It would be foolish to make them our example in all things. They made mistakes in interpretation of doctrine and in its application, but we can follow them in their humility, their devotion, their zeal for the cause of Christ. It is not possible for all preachers to attain the standard set by these men. They were personalities. Yet it is possible for every preacher to be himself. A man may have five talents, or two, or one, but he can be himself. He can be free, free to say what has been given him to say, free to talk as friend to friend, and glad, in the service of Christ, to be “forgotten into immortality.”

¹ *Reflection on Rhetoric and Poetry* (quoted by Bull, *Preaching and Sermon Construction*), pages 256-257.

VI

THE GREAT LATIN PREACHERS

THE great Latin preachers lived and worked under the shadow of impending disaster. They were in the disaster and yet were only vaguely aware that the empire which seemed eternal was disintegrating under their very eyes. Ambrose, who lived close to the center of political life in the Roman Empire, seems to have been unaware of what was happening. Augustine saw the coming storm but was powerless to help or hinder. Rome fell in 412, and Carthage in 439. Jerome died in 419, Ambrose in 397, and Augustine in 430. Jerome suffered most from the shock. When the tragic news of the fall of Rome came to him in his monastic retreat in Bethlehem he was working on his commentary to Ezekiel. The news, in his own words, "stupefied" him. He wrote about "the dreadful rumor" that had come out of the West. He was unable to write without sobbing his heart out. "The city that had taken the whole world," he exclaimed, "has itself been taken." He felt that with Rome's overthrow the whole world was rushing to ruin. "Who could have believed it?" he writes. It seemed to him that the whole world was on fire and that the Holy Land itself was filled with refugees.

It was a day like our day. We, too, live in a period of history when empires are breaking up. The world seems rushing into ruin and that all that we love best and put our trust in, is being burned up in a mighty, un-

controlled conflagration. Who could have believed that Holland, which had withstood the Duke of Alva, and Belgium and France, which had triumphed over the Hun, could be brought under servitude to a war-crazy dictator? Who could have believed that London should have to see with her own eyes the treasures of centuries ruthlessly destroyed, and that even America would be compelled to conscript citizens for the army and gird herself for self-defense. It is incredible but it is true, and it should enable us to follow more faithfully the steps of the great Latin preachers, upon whom the end of the world came. Perhaps we, too, may be as helpless as they were to stay the hand of the invader, but a study of their preaching may enable us to see with clearer eyes where our own present duty lies.

Disaster on a world scale does not come in a day, or a month, or a year. The seeds of the present tragedy were sown far back in the years before the first Great War, and Rome did not fall in a day. The seeds of decay had been planted before the armies of the North began to march. There were rumblings long before the earthquake. The cause of the downfall of Rome has been a fruitful subject of discussion. The charge was brought against the Christian Church that it undermined the old hardy Roman virtues of courage, valor, and willingness to fight and die for the empire. It is a charge renewed in our day. The German Faith Movement would discard the virtues of Christianity for the harsh virtues of the old German gods. Hitler and his satellites demand a Teutonic morality that "will rank higher than Christianity." It is a morality that will be grounded in race and soil and blood. What is demanded is Nietzsche's superman, who has no inhibitions about brotherhood. It is, of course, a timeless

conflict. The old opponents are again in the field and once more the prophet is throwing out the challenge, "Thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece."

The age of the great Latin preachers saw a new order of ideas, a new way of life struggling with the old. It was a period of inner decay and outward encroachment. The story of the inner decay is more difficult to trace than that of the outward encroachment. The morale of the true Roman was undermined by high taxation, by court luxury, infanticide, the increase of waste lands, the depopulation of towns, and, above all, by the disintegrating effects of the slavery system. If it had been left to itself, with the new, strengthening forces of Christianity, the empire might have continued indefinitely, but that was not to be. The frontiers of the far-flung empire were difficult to hold, and gradually the barbarians, who themselves were Roman trained, began to cross the frontiers and lay claim to Roman territory. Hostile armies began to appear on every frontier and at the same time the Imperial army began to weaken. The barbarian superseded the old Roman on the field of battle. This could happen only because Rome was already on the road to ruin. The Roman army was still valorous but it was undermanned.

"In valor, discipline, and science, the Roman armies remained what they had always been, and the peasant emperors of Illyricum were worthy successors of Cincinnatus and Caius Marius. But the problem was how to replenish those armies. Men were wanting; the empire perished for want of men. The proof of this is in the fact that the contest with barbarism was carried on by the help of barbarian soldiers. . . . It must have been because the Empire could not furnish soldiers for its own defence, that it was driven to the strange expedient of turning its enemies and plunderers into its

defenders. . . . Nor was it only in the army that the empire was compelled to borrow men from barbarism. To cultivate the fields whole tribes were borrowed. From the time of Marcus Aurelius, it was a practice to grant lands within the empire, sometimes to prisoners of war, sometimes to tribes applying for admission.”¹

When it is asked what caused Rome's overthrow, the answer is made: “It was a period of sterility or barrenness in human beings; the human harvest was bad. And among the causes of this barrenness we find, in the more barbarous nations, the enfeeblement produced by the too-abrupt introduction of civilization, and universally the absence of industrial habits, and the disposition to listlessness which belongs to the military character.”² Christianity, at the same time, was unable to supply the heroic motive necessary to save the empire. Monasticism was in the ascendant. Jerome fled to the Holy Land, there to found a monastery, a nunnery, a hospice. Augustine lived under monastic rules and Ambrose was so outspoken upon the subject of virginity that mothers forbade their daughters to attend upon his preaching. Monks and eunuchs had influence far beyond their abilities. The manly virtues were forgotten, the virtue of the monk and the nun were extolled, and the cloister too often was substituted for citizenship. The day had passed when men stood up strong and unafraid, claiming the prize of citizenship, saying, “I am a Roman!” Perhaps in these days of softness, when men are willing to let their freedom slip out of their hands if only they can go on riding in their limousines and listening to their radios, it would

¹ J. R. Seeley, *Roman Imperialism*, pages 47-60.

² *Ibid.*, page 61.

help if we reread the story of Rome's overthrow and began again to "endure hardness."

Whatever part the Christian Church had in dismantling paganism, it is incontrovertible that out of the ruins of the old, a new world was born. When the Eternal City was overrun by the barbarians and the altar fires went out, Augustine saw rising out of the ruins the City of God. Professor Wright of London University outlines in a striking way this parallel of life and death.

"The gap [he says] that was made in the world by the fall of the Roman Empire was slowly but surely filled by the rise of the Catholic Church. It sometimes happens that a farmer will carefully plant a young elm tree in his field, and that soon afterwards a bird by chance will drop an acorn in the hedgerow close by. The elm is already a strong sapling, and it has every advantage of ground, light and air; the acorn is small and insignificant, and it must struggle for existence against a thousand dangers and a thousand rivals. The years pass by; and the elm becomes a tall tree, with spreading foliage, while the acorn shoot is still hardly to be noticed among the briars and bushes that cluster round it. But the young oak is striking its roots deep, and grows sturdier every summer, and soon, rising above the hedge level, it stretches its branches out towards its neighbour. By that time the elm has reached maturity, and begins slowly to decay. One great bough snaps off, and then another; and at last on a night of furious storm some tremendous gust brings the whole tree down, uprooted from the ground. Then in the place where once they stood side by side the oak is left alone. Not unlike to this was the process of the decay of Rome and the growth of Christianity."¹

Augustine's vision of the City of God is a true word

¹ *Fathers of the Church*, pages 3-4.

of prophecy spoken at a time when everyone was despairing of civilization. His faith and confidence in God and in His kingdom should strengthen our hands and cause us to see more clearly wherein true civilization consists. Civilization is not a matter of architecture, it is a possession of the heart of man. It is freedom, truth, honor, courage, love. These are the things men live by, and for which they are ready to die and often it has been true that at the very time when temples and towns were falling, something finer was rising. What, for example, was going on when Napoleon was bleeding Europe white and men were saying that the end of all good things had come? Within that same period the poet Wordsworth was doing his best work. Shelley was writing his poem *To a Skylark*, in which he said:

“ We look before and after,
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of
saddest thought.”

Goethe was at work on *Faust* when Prussia was suing for peace. Beethoven was composing his *Fifth Symphony* while the Peninsular War was being fought. Sir Walter Scott was standing on the threshold of his amazing career. That was the age of Keats, and Byron, and Hegel. So, too, when Rome was falling and the empire breaking up, Jerome was at work on the immortal Vulgate, Ambrose was composing the hymns of praise we now sing, and Augustine was dreaming of the city not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. It is still true. Today, when nations

seem to be dissolving, there are being created in science, literature, and art things that will endure when the tears of the present are forgotten. There is in England an inscription in an old country church which reads, "In the year 1643 when all things sacred were either demolished or profaned, this church was built, by one whose singular praise it is to have done the best things in the worst times, and to have helped them in the most calamitous."

The tragic wickedness and open immorality of Rome drove Jerome into the wilderness. He was the greatest scholar of his age and has left behind him an enduring monument. There was something of wildness in his make-up. In order to tame his body he became a monk, but his mind no man could tame. He was outspoken, scholarly, vigorous, versatile, eloquent, acclaimed to be the next pope. He was master of Greek and Latin and Hebrew. He learned Hebrew without the aid of grammar or lexicon, without the help of vowel points or diacritical marks. He was a pronounced controversialist and struck back at his opponents in language neither elegant nor Christian. He called his critics "two-legged asses in whose ears he would blow like a trumpet." In his letters about virginity he often offended against good taste. He was devoted to Origen as well as to Tertullian, and the allegorical method is everywhere present in his writings. Speaking of the miracle of the Shunamite lad, he says, "Unless Christ sleep with us and rests with us in death, we have no strength to receive the warmth of eternal life." He was confirmed in his love for asceticism and made the mistake no preacher should ever make, of having as his closest friends enthusiastic and eulogistic women. They hung on his words. They sought his

counsel. They followed him to Bethlehem and there built for him a monastery, a nunnery, a church, a hospice. They impoverished themselves for his sake, supporting him in life and comforting him in death.

The relation of the Christian to the pagan world had raised perplexing problems in the early church. Shall a Christian withdraw from the world and keep his heart pure, or shall he mingle with the world and seek to make the world pure? Jerome, like thousands of his fellow Christians, withdrew from the world. He extolled celibacy and virginity. It is a position easy to understand, for the world of that day was engulfed in wickedness and nothing that man could do seemed to avail. Roman life was

“luxurious, selfish and immoral, and was rendered more voluptuously effeminate by contact with Eastern manners. The people of Rome consisted of the dregs of all nationalities, which—to borrow the strong image of Juvenal—poured themselves into Rome as into a common sewer. Their very names were hideous. . . . The pale and wrinkled faces of eunuchs became more and more common in the streets, and ‘the Syrian Orontes flowed into the Tiber’ with fuller and fuller streams. The depraved multitude slept at night in the taverns, or under the awnings of the theatres, where they fiercely quarreled with each other over their games of dice, or about the merits of their favourite charioteers. Wine, betting, gambling, theatres, races, and licentiousness absorbed their days and nights. They were no longer content even with bread and the games of the circus, but required more liberal and more varied doles for their services as *claqueurs* in the theatres and clients in the theatres and clients in the streets.”¹

To a world of sin and wickedness the heralds and

¹ Farrar, *Lives of the Fathers*, Vol. II, page 285.

ambassadors of Christ may assume different attitudes. There are those like Jerome who flee from the city of destruction and find rest to their souls in solitude. Indeed, Whitehead says that "religion is what a man does with his solitariness." In a sense that is so, and meditation and prayer have been the food of the souls of many of God's saints. Jerome found in his monastery in Bethlehem leisure for study and literary work which have enriched the world. On the other hand, Ambrose lived in the midst of political controversy and challenged the emperor to follow the Christian way. He fought like a soldier in the arena, and subdued the enemies of the church. He was too near the scene to sense the impending disaster and that perhaps is to his credit. Holding to an ascetic ideal, Ambrose lived his busy life in the midst of world affairs. His work was finished thirteen years before Rome collapsed, and in his writings he seems unconscious of the appalling storm that was already approaching from the North. While the empire was growing weaker he labored to make the church strong. He had belonged to the ruling classes and had been destined for a political career. He was of noble birth, educated in grammar, jurisprudence, rhetoric and versed in the Latin and Greek authors. He was one of three children, two brothers and a sister, all devout and distinguished Christians. The brother, Satyrus, was a lawyer of great ability and became the governor of a Roman province. The sister, Marcellina, was the constant companion of Ambrose and she was idealized in his work *On Virgins*. There is a story, doubtless apocryphal, to the effect that when a babe, a swarm of bees settled on his face and crept into his open mouth. His parents were terrified and said, "If the child lives he will become something great."

When he was thirty he was appointed governor of the province of Æmilia-Liguria. In commissioning him, the prefect said, "Go and act not as a judge but as a bishop." It was in his capacity as governor that Ambrose was drawn into the life of the church. The bishopric of Milan was vacant. There was no unity of purpose, for Arianism was rampant. It was the duty of Ambrose to preside at the election of a new bishop and to keep the peace. In the contest, which was long and stormy, suddenly a child's voice was heard, "Ambrose for bishop." Immediately the people took up the cry and, although he opposed the movement, all parties united in his election. He was a layman and not yet baptized. He was only thirty-four. He had no thought of entering the ministry of the church. He was already well on his way to a distinguished political career. He did all he could to avoid being consecrated, and even prepared to escape by flight, but finally he was compelled to accept the choice of the church and within eight days he was baptized, confirmed, ordained and consecrated bishop of the Christian Church. The wisdom of the choice so suddenly and perhaps providentially made was soon abundantly confirmed. Ambrose set out immediately to prepare himself for his office. His brother forsook his promising career and devoted himself to helping forward the work of the church. His sister, too, became his constant guide and counselor. He had natural endowments for administration, but he studied hard to master the substance of the church's creed and to approve himself a good minister of the Word.

He possessed the instincts of a good pastor. He was interested in people, all sorts of people, rich and poor, master and slave, emperor and common folk. He dis-

posed of his own possessions so as to be free from worldly cares. The silver and gold he distributed to the poor. His estates, which were considerable, he gave to the church, reserving the income for his sister as long as she lived. He kept open house. His hospitality was extended to all who cared to come. Leaders of the social and political life of the community came to him for counsel. The poor came to him as a friend. He bought back into freedom men who had fallen into the hands of the enemy. He melted down the sacred vessels of the sanctuary to provide means for their ransom. When criticized, he asked "which they considered to be the more valuable, church vessels or living souls, and whether the validity of the sacraments depended on the gold of the chalice and pattens."¹ He had his study in the spacious hall of his own house. The doors were open and he was always accessible. He could be seen by any one at any time. His hours were occupied by study, by personal interviews, by administrative duties, by preaching. He wanted to be where people were. And with all this public service he did not neglect his private devotional life. His habits can be discovered by reading his sermons, and his devotion is revealed in the hymns that have come from his pen. "Religion," said Henry B. Wright, "is imparted by contagion, not taught by words. Purity, honesty, unselfishness, love, the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ, are not philosophical propositions to be accepted by the minds of men. They are actual living forces which spread by contagion—I almost venture to assert by contagion only—from man to man. It was our Lord Himself who characterized these forces in terms, not of philosophical abstractions, but of living

¹ *The Office of the Ministry*, II. xxviii.

organisms—the seed and the leaven. All He asked was the opportunity of contact.”¹ To love people, to be with people, to move among people as Jesus did, is the first step towards the Christian pulpit. The man who likes people is on his way to be a preacher.

He was a faithful and painstaking student. He had come to his office without theological training and he did his best to fit himself for his high calling. He had the advantage that some men seem to miss. He knew he did not know. “I began to teach what I had not yet myself learnt,” he says. “I had to be learning and teaching at the same time, since I had no leisure to learn before.”² We have the testimony of Augustine to his intellectual devotion and his scholastic diligence.

“What sweet joys [he says] Thy Bread had for the hidden mouth of his spirit. . . . When he was reading, his eye glided over the pages, and his heart searched out the sense, but his voice and tongue were at rest. Ofttimes when we had come (for no man was forbidden to enter, nor was it his wont that any who came should be announced to him), we saw him thus reading to himself, and never otherwise; and having long sat silent (for who durst intrude on one so intent?), we were fain to depart, conjecturing that in the small interval which he obtained, free from the din of others’ business, for the recruiting of his mind, he was loath to be taken off; and perchance he dreaded lest if the author he read should deliver any thing obscurely, some attentive or perplexed hearer should desire him to expound it, or to discuss some of the harder questions; so that his time being thus spent, he could not turn over so many volumes as he desired; although the preserving of his voice (which a very little speaking

¹ Address, “The Incarnation Truth.”

² *The Office of the Ministry*, I. i.

would weaken) might be the truer reason for his reading to himself." ¹

Ambrose was not an original thinker. He was a borrower of other men's thinking, and followed the allegorical method of interpretation. He was devoted to the orthodox position and was the deadly enemy of Arianism, which he opposed on every occasion, filling the churches under his care with a ministry of his own choosing. He was indefatigable, preaching, administering, preparing himself for his great work. He published homilies on the history of creation, expositions on the Psalms, a commentary on St. Luke's Gospel; treatises on faith, on the Holy Spirit, on the Sacraments; a volume *On Duties*, which served for years as a sort of textbook on Christian ethics.

He was essentially an ecclesiastic, a lover of the church, devoted to its services, its good name, its progress. He believed in the church, its authority, its services, its sacraments. He partook of the Eucharist daily and daily administered it to others. He allowed no political interference with the church. "Divine things," he says, "are not subject to the power of the Emperor. . . . The Emperor has no right over what belongs to God. . . . The palace concerns the Emperor, the churches the bishop." ² The emphasis, placed upon the authority of the church by Cyprian, was carried to its conclusion by Ambrose. He compelled the Christian Emperor Theodosius to acknowledge his authority and to supplicate for forgiveness before receiving the sacrament. The controversy of Ambrose with the Emperor is a long and fascinatingly interesting story, but in the end the will of Ambrose

¹ *Confessions*, Book VI. iii. 3.

² *Epistle XX*, viii, xix.

prevailed. In 390 Theodosius had consented to a terrible massacre of some seven thousand people in Thessalonica. Ambrose protested and wrote the Emperor:

“I advise, I entreat, I exhort, I admonish. It grieves me that you, who were an example of singular piety, who exercised consummate clemency, who would not suffer individual offenders to be placed in jeopardy, should not mourn over the destruction of so many innocent persons. . . . Add not sin to sin by following a course which has proved the ruin of many. . . . I dare not offer the Sacrifice, if you determine to attend. For can it possibly be right, after the slaughter of so many, to do that which may not be done after the blood of only one innocent person has been shed? I trow not! . . . You have my love, my affection, my prayers. If you believe that, follow my instructions; if you believe it, acknowledge the truth of what I say; but if you believe it not, at least pardon me for preferring God to my sovereign.”¹

It was not that the Bishop wished to usurp the authority of the Emperor. Not at all. The church was loyal to the state, prayed for the state, supported the state, but the cause of God must not be contravened by the state. In a sermon in Milan the Emperor felt the Bishop had attacked him. “You have preached against me, Bishop,” he said. “Not against you but for you,” Ambrose replied. “The people make emperors not priests.”

It is impossible to overlook the significance of this conflict, issuing, as it did, in the recognition of the authority of the church to be supreme within its own sphere. As Protestants, we cannot follow the severity of the sacerdotal interpretation of the church but we can and should exalt the place of the church in the af-

¹ *Epistle* I.I. xii, xiii, xvii.

fairs of state. The church is in the world to judge the world, not to reflect world opinion. It voices, perhaps imperfectly, the Christian conscience and must not bow down before the authority of the state but must challenge the state and sit in judgment upon the state. The preacher who is loyal to his office is jealous of the authority of the church, and he does the cause of Christ a disservice when he allows the good name of the church to be compromised.

In his love for the church and his interest in the common people Ambrose emphasized the importance and altered the form of the worship service. He had definite and consistent ideas regarding hymnology and liturgical worship. He introduced antiphonal singing, and it may be this fact that suggested the idea that the *Te Deum* was an antiphon sung responsively by Ambrose and Augustine. He has been called "The Father of Church Song," and some of his hymns are still in use, thus linking the twentieth with the fourth century. One of his hymns, translated by Dr. Louis Benson and set to the tune of Rimington, has a high place in hymnology:

" O Splendor of God's glory bright,
 From light eternal bringing light,
 Thou Light of light, light's living Spring,
 True Day, all days illumining:

" Come, very Sun of heaven's love,
 In lasting radiance from above,
 And pour the Holy Spirit's ray
 On all we think or do today.

" Confirm our will to do the right,
 And keep our hearts from envy's blight;

Let faith her eager fires renew
And hate the false, and love the true.

“Dawn’s glory gilds the earth and skies,
Let Him, our perfect Morn, arise,
The Word in God the Father One,
The Father imaged in the Son.”¹

His liturgy is still in use in the Cathedral of Milan. It is an amazing thing that a man, dedicated in his early life to politics, should become in time Bishop of the church and a pathfinder in the realm of worship. Worship, however, is a natural and necessary service on the part of every preacher who seeks leadership and efficiency. Often he does his best work before the sermon is begun for when the music is well chosen, the prayers quietly and reverently offered, God has already appeared and the hearts of the people have been lifted up. The minister who devotes himself to preaching alone has no holy of holies in his temple. Each man must discover for himself what to do about it. There is and can be no authoritative guide. Each prayer book has its own excellencies, but, as Dr. J. R. P. Sclater says:

“The Universal Reformed Liturgy has not yet been discovered. There is work still to be done. It would be a strange instance of Time’s revenges, if the descendants of the Puritan and the Covenanter should hand back to their brethren of the Anglican tradition a liturgy on which all could unite. Stranger things have happened, if the interest displayed in America about orders of service contains within it anything of a prophecy. But one thing is sure—the ultimate liturgy will not be wholly liturgical; for no liturgy can

¹ Hymn 32, *The Hymnal* published by authority of The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., 1933.

be complete. Leading in prayer is unquestionably aided by personality—as we all shall agree, who can remember occasions, when some true man of God raised the prayer mood of a congregation by his own close contact with the Unseen. There must always be an opportunity for free prayer, to be used by those who can use it: and the churches of our lineage, in retaining the spontaneous expression of our common needs, have been retaining something of real worship value.”¹

Augustine, in his *Confessions*, gives us his personal impressions of the preaching of the man who later became his spiritual father in Christ:

“ To Milan I came, to Ambrose the Bishop, known to the whole world as among the best of men, Thy devout servant; whose eloquent discourse did then plentifully dispense unto Thy people the flour of Thy wheat, the gladness of Thy oil, and the sober inebriation of Thy wine. To him was I unknowing led by Thee, that by him I might knowingly be led to Thee. That man of God received me as a father, and shewed me an Episcopal kindness on my coming. Thenceforth I began to love him, at first indeed not as a teacher of the truth (which I utterly despaired of in Thy church) but as a person kind towards myself. And I listened diligently to him preaching to the people, not with that intent I ought, but, as it were, trying his eloquence, whether it answered the fame thereof, or flowed fuller or lower than was reported; and I hung on his words attentively; but of the matter I was as a careless and scornful looker-on; and I was delighted with the sweetness of his discourse, more recondite, yet in manner, less winning and harmonious, than that of Faustus. Of the matter, however, there was no comparison; for the one was wandering amid Manichæan delusions, the other teaching salvation most soundly.”²

¹ *The Public Worship of God*, page 57.

² *Confessions* V. xiii. 23.

There are emphases here worth noting. There is the personal kindness of the preacher who received the wayward young man as "a father," showing him "episcopal kindness" which issued in love. The sermon itself taught "salvation most soundly," for while he was interested in the words rather than in the sense, yet later he confesses that he could not separate them. "While I opened my heart," he says, "to admit 'how eloquently he spake,' there also entered 'how truly he spake'; but this by degrees."¹

Ambrose was called in his day the *Suavissimus Doctor*, the *Orator Catholicus*. He was a simple, correct, logical preacher. His sermons were instructive rather than inspiring. He lacked the color, the imagination, the dramatic rhythm that belonged to Gregory and Chrysostom. He knew, however, the modern psychology of propaganda. He propagandized the truth, that is to say, he preached so that the masses of the people understood what he wished to convey. He was no slave to the clock. A sermon, he said, could be too short. Short sermons made no impressions and yet a long sermon was boring to the common people. There is no guidance in Ambrose for a time schedule of preaching, and that is well, for a long sermon may seem short and a short sermon may seem long.

In his preaching he kept close to the Scriptures, following Origen in his expositions, preferring the Old Testament because, as he said, it was more interesting and at the same time yielded itself more readily to the allegorical method. There is a noticeable absence of what we call Gospel preaching, although the face of Christ often shines through the language. "He is the

¹ *Confessions* V. xiv. 24.

Highest Good," he exclaims, "for He is Good from Good. . . . He is our Treasure; He is our Way; He is our Wisdom, our Righteousness, our Shepherd, the Good Shepherd; He is our life. You see how many goods are comprised in this one Good. . . . Wherefore the Lord Jesus Himself is the Highest Good."¹ He enriched his sermons by illustrations gathered from every source—from Scripture, from the writings of others, from the physician, the pugilist, the charioteer, the society prima donna, the musician. He interjected personal reminiscences and anecdotes, stories from Greek heroes and Christian saints, legends like *Quo Vadis*, and traditions which had come into his possession and especially from the world of nature. He was a lover of the world God has made. "What pleasure," he exclaims, "there is in the life of rustics! They have an eye for 'purple violets, the white lilies, the red glow of the roses, the fields painted now with golden, now with orange, now with multicolored blossoms, of which you know not whether the beauty or the perfume delights you most.'"² The sun is to them "the eye of the world, the joy of the day, the beauty of the sky, the grace of nature, the excellence of creation."³ Nature to them was the very garment of God. "The rose with its thorns is 'the mirror of human life,' the joys of which are encompassed by cares. The moon 'proclaims the mystery of Christ,' and its mutations are suggestive of spiritual truths. Beasts and birds are living emblems—*e. g.*, the dog of fidelity, the bear of parental care, the kingfisher of faith, the crane of altruistic service, the stork of filial piety. Fish represent men; the sea typifies the Gospel or the Christian Church. In short, to

¹ *On Isaac* XXIX. vi. 8.

² *Hexameron* III. xxxvi.

³ *Hexameron* IV. i.

Ambrose the material is ever the symbol of the spiritual." ¹

The task of the preachers of the early church was clear cut. They championed righteousness in an unrighteous world, purity in the midst of an impure and immoral social order. They were all of them, and Ambrose is no exception, moral preachers, preachers for a new and better society. On one occasion he cried out, "You are men and women, you know the things that pertain to human nature. If I do not speak more plainly, yet you understand what I wish—or rather, what I do not wish—to say." ² On another occasion he said, "I prefer to admonish such a person publicly rather than compel him privately to do his duty. I do not betray his name, but his own conscience makes him blush." ³ He preached against luxury. "The lady," he says, "perspires under a load of jewels or shivers in silks—no matter, she delights in them because they are so costly. What nature would lead her to avoid, avarice makes her desire." ⁴ He preached against gluttony. "You would imagine," he said, "that it was a place of execution rather than a kitchen, and that a battle was being waged rather than a dinner got ready; it is all swimming with blood." ⁵ He preached against ostentation. "You cover your walls," he said, "but strip men. The naked man cries before your house, and you are engrossed in choosing marbles to adorn your floors." ⁶ He preached against drunkenness. "How can I bear to speak of such things?" cried Ambrose. "Yet how, consistently with my duty, can I

¹ *Hexameron* (quoted by Dudden, *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, pages 475-476).

² *The Death of Satyr*, II. lx.

³ *Exposition Luke VIII. lxxvi.*

⁴ *Concerning Naboth XXVI.*

⁵ *Concerning Elijah XXV.*

⁶ *Concerning Naboth LVI.*

pass them by in silence? How, again, can I bewail them fittingly? Wine has caused the loss of innumerable souls.”¹ He preached against usury which sometimes claimed fifty per cent per annum. “Why,” asked some, “does the bishop preach against money-lenders—as though money-lending were something new, and not an old and established custom?” “That is true,” replied Ambrose, “and I do not deny it. Sin, too, is an old custom—old as Adam. But Christ came to abolish the old and bring in the new.”²

Ambrose, says F. Homes Dudden, regarded preaching as one of the principal functions of his office and he had decided views as to how it should be done:

“A sermon ought to be full of understanding and good sense. In style it ought to be neither too elaborate nor too unpolished, but simple, dignified, and, above all, lucid. The preacher must remember that many of his hearers are ignorant people, and must, therefore, use plain language such as they can understand. Proper attention should be paid to elocution; not every one is endowed with a musical voice, yet all can speak vigorously and distinctly, if only they will take pains to do so. As regards length, a sermon should be neither very long nor very short: long sermons bore people, while very short ones fail to make a deep impression. Large subjects are best dealt with in a series of discourses.”³

He had the ability, which every great preacher has, of coining phrases and composing language so that it lingers in the mind. A few examples may be given: “He who has not one master, has many.”⁴ “This only I know, that I know not the things which I cannot

¹ *Concerning Elijah* LXVII. ² *Concerning Tobias* LXXXVIII.

³ *The Office of the Ministry*, I. ci.

⁴ *Exposition St. Luke IX.* vi.

know.”¹ “When we have travelled all ways, we shall come to the End of all ways, who saith ‘I am the way.’”² “He who is unfaithful to God cannot be truly a friend of man.”³ “The Will of God is the measure of things.”⁴ “No one heals himself by wounding another.” “Where prayer is poured forth, sins are covered.”⁵

If Ambrose had not been a great preacher, a great churchman, his name would have been immortal, because it was he who threw open the gates of new life to the great Augustine. The story of Augustine’s awakening has often been told and it cannot be retold too frequently. It is best given in the words of the *Confessions*, the best book on religious psychology ever written. It is one of the world’s classics and should be in every minister’s library, or, better still, in his heart. This is the unforgettable story:

“I cast myself down I know not how, under a certain fig tree, giving full vent to my tears; and the floods of mine eyes gushed out, an *acceptable sacrifice* to Thee. And, not indeed in these words, yet to this purpose, spake I much unto Thee: *And Thou, O Lord, how long? how long, Lord, wilt Thou be angry, for ever? Remember not our former iniquities*, for I felt that I was held by them. I sent up these sorrowful words: How long? how long, ‘to-morrow, and to-morrow?’ Why not now? Why not is there this hour an end to my uncleanness? So was I speaking, and weeping in the most bitter contrition of my heart, when, lo! I heard from a neighbouring house a voice, as of boy or girl, I know

¹ *The Incarnation* XXI.

² *Exposition Psalm CXVIII.* v. 22.

³ *The Office of the Ministry*, III. cxxxii.

⁴ *Hexameron* II. iv.

⁵ *Dialogue of Job and David* II. viii.

not, chanting, and oft repeating, 'Take up and read; Take up and read.' Instantly, my countenance altered, I began to think most intently, whether children were wont in any kind of play to sing such words; nor could I remember ever to have heard the like. So, checking the torrent of my tears, I arose, interpreting it to be no other than a command from God, to open the book, and read the first chapter I should find. For I had heard of Antony, that coming in during the reading of the Gospel, he received the admonition, as if what was being read, was spoken to him: *Go, sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me.* And by such oracle he was forthwith converted unto Thee. Eagerly then I returned to the place where Alypius was sitting; for there had I laid the volume of the Apostle, when I arose thence. I seized, opened, and in silence read that section, on which my eyes first fell: *Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying: but put we on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, in concupiscence.* No further would I read; nor needed I, for instantly at the end of this sentence, by a light as it were of serenity infused into my heart, all the darkness of doubt vanished away. Then putting my finger between, or some other mark, I shut the volume, and with a calmed countenance made it known to Alypius. And what was wrought in him, which I knew not, he thus shewed me."¹

It was this evangelical experience that determined everything Augustine wrote or said. After the Apostles, he was the first great *evangelical* preacher. He knew the meaning of the word Grace. He understood the central place of Christ in life and in experience. The note of the *kerygma* is unmistakable. "All my hope," he says, "is no where but in Thy exceeding great mercy. Give what Thou enjoimest, and enjoin what

¹ *Confessions* VIII. xii. 28-30.

Thou wilt. . . . For too little doth he love Thee who loves any thing with Thee, which he loveth not for Thee. O love, who ever burnest and never consumest! O charity, my God! kindle me.”¹ “Too late loved I Thee, O Thou Beauty of ancient days, yet ever new! Too late I loved Thee! And behold, Thou wert within, and I abroad, and there I searched for Thee; deformed I, plunging amid those fair forms, which Thou hadst made. Thou wert with me, but I was not with Thee. Things held me far from Thee, which, unless they were in Thee, were not at all. Thou calledst, and shoutedst, and burstest, my deafness. Thou flashedst, shonest, and scatteredst my blindness. Thou breathedst odours, and I *draw in breath* and *pant for Thee*. I tasted, and *hunger and thirst*. Thou touchedst me, and I burned for Thy peace.”²

It is this note that keeps resounding through the pages of all his writings and all his preaching. No man can be a great preacher who does not know God at first-hand, although it is not necessary to have a catastrophic experience such as had Augustine, or Spurgeon, or John Bunyan, or St. Paul. One may come into his knowledge of the Grace of God as did Henry Drummond and Phillips Brooks. It may be, too, that after years of formal preaching one may enter into a renewing knowledge of God, as did Thomas Chalmers and Robert W. Dale. Dale's experience may be your experience. One day, preparing an Easter sermon, he was brought through a sanctified imagination into the very presence of the Living Christ. Suddenly he stood up, saying, “Christ is alive. Christ is alive. My people must know it,” and from that Easter every Sunday

¹ *Confessions* X. xxiv. 40.

² *Ibid.*, X. xxvii. 38.

in Carr's Lane Church an Easter hymn was sung. That was a quickening experience and on that day a new power came into his preaching. The centrality of the *kerygma* in Augustine cannot be missed. "It is always the Gospel that terrifies me. For none can surpass me in desire for a life of unlaborious ease; to me there is nothing better, nothing more delightful than to occupy myself with the treasury of God, with none to disturb me. That is delightful; that is a really good thing. But to preach, to argue, to correct, to try and build up, to strive for individual souls! There you have the real burden, a mighty load, grievous toil. Who would not shrink from it? Yet, again, it is always the Gospel that terrifies me!"¹

If this evangelical experience made Augustine a preacher it also made him a theologian. What we know as Calvinism was the rediscovery of Augustine's emphasis upon the sovereignty and grace of God. Salvation is not man's discovery of God. It is God's discovery of man. "'Oh, ye men! I made man right, but he has gone astray. You left Me and, left to yourselves, you perished; but I am going to seek that which has perished.' 'You left Me,' He says, 'and so you lost life and the Life was the Light of men.'"² Salvation is all of God. The doctrine of the Grace of God, free, boundless, sufficient, supreme, stands like a rock in the midst of our troubled life. The subtlety of some of Augustine's arguments and the logic by which he reached certain of his conclusions do not concern us here. He often mistook his own prejudices for divine revelation but his thesis abides. His devotion to the doctrines he espoused led him at times into intolerance.

¹ Pope, *St. Augustine*, page 174.

² *Ibid.*, page 174.

He was a bitter controversialist, so that frequently he fell into error. He was wrong in insisting that the Roman episcopacy alone mediated salvation. He was wrong when he justified persecution, as in the case of the Donatists. He was wrong in his denial of anything good in human nature. His zeal for Christ and the church, however, was always the driving force behind all that he said and did. Since Christ has laid down His life for the sheep why should they not be compelled to enter the fold? "Why," he asks, "should not the church compel her lost sons to return?" "What else is the meaning of 'Compel them to come in,' after it had previously been said, 'Bring in,' and the answer was: 'Lord, it is done as thou commandest, and yet there is room'? Wherefore, if by the power which the church has received by divine appointment in its due season, through the religious character and faith of kings, those who are found in the highways and hedges—that is, in heresies and schisms—are compelled to come in, then let them not find fault because they are compelled, but consider to what they are so compelled."¹ Such teaching was the prelude to the Inquisition and reveals how wrong even a good man may sometimes be.

From what has been said, it will be readily discovered that Augustine had the qualities that go to the making of a great preacher. He had zeal, enthusiasm, imagination, more than a touch of dogmatism, scholarship, a passionate devotion to his Lord which was born of a great experience. He was a hard worker. He was never idle. His tongue and his pen were always busy. He had dealings with all classes and conditions of men. Carthage was a city of half a million people, and there

¹ *Correction of the Donatists*, Chapter XXIV.

soldiers, officials, sailors, retired army men, privileged people, merchants, Greeks, Arabs, Romans, Jews, Manichees, Donatists, heretics of all kinds were within sound of his voice. Life in Africa was full of vivid color. Fear and luxury mingled at the baths, the theatres, the palatial mansions; and bribery, corruption, oppression of the poor, drunkenness, and vice ran their course unhindered. Drinking was so bad that people ate salt food to provoke a thirst.¹ Yet in his day Christianity was acclaimed the supreme religion. In a sermon, Augustine says, "One thing I do know, and you know it as well as I do, and that is that in this city there are many houses in which there is not even a single pagan; nor a single house in which there is not a Christian. Indeed, if you look more closely you will not find a house in which there are not more Christians than pagans. Indeed, Faustus complained that there were almost more nuns in the Catholic Church than women who were not nuns."² Augustine draws the practical moral: "You realize, then, the inevitable conclusion: there would be no wrongs in the city if the Christians decided there should not be; hidden wrongs, perhaps; public, no, if only the Christians forbade them."³

There was no question about Augustine's personal mode of life. He lived in voluntary poverty. He took no honorarium. He melted down the sacred vessels of the sanctuary to feed the needy. He wore no ring. He lived by strict monastic rules. He allowed himself a few luxuries, such as silver on his table and linen for his undergarments. He worked hard. He had the oversight of five hundred bishops, and the fact that his

¹ *Sermon* CCCII. xix.

³ *Ibid.*, XXX. iv.

² *Contra Faustum* XXX. iv.

works fill seven volumes in the library of the Fathers bears eloquent testimony to his intellectual diligence. Before his conversion he was an orator of no mean reputation. Coleridge once asked Charles Lamb, "Have you ever heard me preach?" Lamb replied, "My dear Coleridge, I have never heard you do anything else." That may be said of Augustine. Even as a lad he declaimed to his teacher and was applauded in his classroom. At Carthage he was a distinguished teacher of rhetoric. He tells us in his *Confessions* that he "taught rhetoric, and, overcome by cupidity, made sale of a loquacity to overcome by."¹ He received a laurel crown for the best poem, and when he arrived in Italy, after he had delivered what has been called a "masterly oration," he was promptly elected to the Chair of Rhetoric at Milan. In later years he spoke of himself as "a seller of words," but when he became an ambassador of Christ he repudiated the methods and aims of the rhetorician.

His opposition to the practices of the rhetorician is set forth in his treatise "On Christian Doctrine," the Fourth Book of which deals with the art of preaching. Here we may discover from Augustine himself what his pulpit ideals were, and then we can discover from his own preaching how far he fulfilled those ideals. It is quite possible for a teacher of homiletics to fall short of his own instructions and fail to measure up to the standards which he seeks to impose upon his students. Briefly, then, according to Augustine, these are the homiletical rules to be followed by the preacher.

First of all, Augustine demands that every preacher shall know language; that is to say, he must know the value and meaning of words: "The great remedy for

¹ *Confessions* IV. ii. 2.

ignorance of proper signs is knowledge of languages. And men who speak the Latin tongue, of whom are those I have undertaken to instruct, need two other languages for the knowledge of Scripture, Hebrew and Greek, that they may have recourse to the original texts if the endless diversity of the Latin translators throw them into doubt.”¹

A knowledge of words is essential to the preacher, and for preachers today a few rules may be set down. First, the best preaching is conversation. Therefore, cultivate the habit of choosing the best words in the daily intercourse of life. Go to school every day in your choice of accurate and pleasing words and in grammatical construction. Second, keep company with the masters of style. Familiarize yourself with the poets and the best in literature. It is said that Alexander the Great slept with Homer under his pillow and that Robert Louis Stevenson carried in his pocket a copy of Shelley. In style, as in manners, “evil communications corrupt.” Third, beware of cramping your preaching by a slavish subservience to literary style. The most effective sermons do not read well and sermons that read well may not preach well. Nevertheless, there is necessary drudgery in the task of choosing the best word, the right expression. Walter Pater thus describes the style of Flaubert:

“ Possessed of an absolute belief that there exists but one way of expressing one thing, one word to call it by, one adjective to qualify it, one verb to animate it, he gave himself to superhuman labor for the discovery, in every phrase, of that word, that verb, that epithet. In this way he believed in some mysterious harmony of expression, and when a true word seemed to him to lack euphony, still went on seeking

¹ *On Christian Doctrine* II. xi. 16.

another, with invincible patience, certain that he had not yet got hold of the unique word.”¹

Furthermore, there are habits to cultivate. Use short, direct sentences. The day for long involved expressions is gone. Use words that are understood by children. The vocabulary of the average men and women is less than a thousand words. Do not be afraid of simplicity and repetition, provided that what is repeated is rhythmic in its emphasis. There is something to say for the method of Hitler; at least it has been effective. He says, “All effective propaganda has to limit itself only to a very few points and to use them like slogans until even the very last man is able to imagine what is intended by such a word. As soon as one sacrifices this basic principle and tries to become versatile, the effect will fritter away, as the masses are neither able to digest the material offered nor to retain it.”² Above all study the style of the Gospels. It is supreme and unsurpassed and abides with all the fluctuations of spoken and written literature.

“He spoke of lilies, vines, and corn,
The sparrow and the raven;
And words so natural yet so wise
Were on men’s hearts engraven.
And yeast and bread and flax and cloth,
And eggs and fish and candles.
See how the whole familiar world
He most divinely handles.”³

Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes was a careful user of words. In language he was a purist and he was wont

¹ *Essay on Style*, page 127.

² *Mein Kampf*, page 234.

³ E. Tyrrell Green, *How to Preach*.

to say, "A word is not a crystal, transparent and unchanging, it is the skin of a living thought and may vary greatly in color and content according to the circumstances and time in which it is used."¹ Next to the Bible, the lexicon and the dictionary should be the preacher's first books. Augustine's use of words was studied and often found expression in epigrams. Here are a few of his sentences chosen at random: "Do not imagine heresy as the product of little minds. It takes a big mind to make a heresy." "Nothing is more unsatisfactory than a thing that rolls away. That is why money is made round. It won't stand still." "How can you be proud unless you are empty?" "If you were not deflated you would not be inflated." "It is better to be small and healthy like Zaccheus than big and feverish like Goliath." "When some one treads on you in a crowd, it is your foot he treads on. He has not harmed your tongue. Why is it, then, that your tongue cries out?" These are studied expressions and are the current coin of an impressive speaker.

Next to the knowledge of language and languages Augustine recommends the best literature. The preacher must be both a reader and a writer. He must know the best if he would practise it himself. "Men of quick intellect and glowing temperament," Augustine says, "find it easier to become eloquent by reading and listening to eloquent speakers than by following rules for eloquence. And even outside the canon, which to our great advantage is fixed in a place of secure authority, there is no want of ecclesiastical writings, in reading which a man of ability will acquire a tinge of the eloquence with which they are written, even though he does not aim at this, but is solely intent on the

¹ *Decision* (Towne v. Eisner, 245 U. S. 418).

matters treated of; especially, of course, if in addition he practise himself in writing, or dictating, and at last also in speaking, the opinions he has formed on grounds of piety and faith.”¹ Committees on the lookout for preachers should first of all visit the prospective minister’s library and discover the tools with which he works.

Furthermore, according to Augustine, eloquence, like religion, is caught not taught. Sit at the feet of the eloquent man, says Augustine, and learn of him. “As infants cannot learn to speak except by learning words and phrases from those who do speak, why should not men become eloquent without being taught any art of speech, simply by reading and learning the speeches of eloquent men, and by imitating them as far as they can?”² Students for the ministry should seek out with purpose of heart and travel far, if necessary, to hear the best preachers, the best speakers. Indeed, one does not need to travel far, for in the seclusion of one’s own room the best speaking in all parts of the world can be heard and studied. Augustine speaks out against all sham oratory, all overtraining of voice, all unnatural gestures, all that was involved in traditional Greek rhetoric. “Beware of the man,” he says, “who abounds in eloquent nonsense, and so much the more if the hearer is pleased with what is not worth listening to, and thinks that because the speaker is eloquent what he says must be true.”³

Finally, the preacher must have something to say. John Bunyan, who had always something to say, speaks about “shaking the sermon” out of his mind. That is

¹ *On Christian Doctrine* IV. iii. 4.

² *Ibid.*, IV. iii. 5.

³ *Ibid.*, IV. v. 7.

better than shaking it out of a barrel, or out of a preacher's manual or card index. Samuel Pepys speaks of "poor lazy sermons," and Dryden made bold to say that "more vacant pulpits would more converts make." It was Archbishop Whately who said, "Preach not because you have to say something, but because you have something to say."¹ That is what Augustine means. The preacher, he says, should not be "so anxious about the eloquence as about the clearness of his teaching."² "The eloquent divine," he continues, "when he is urging a practical truth, must not only teach so as to give instruction, and please so as to keep up the attention, but he must also sway the mind so as to subdue the will."³

Was it not a great actor, Garrick, who when asked by a clergyman why the stage seemed to have more interest to people than the pulpit said, "Too many preach truth as if it were fiction. We act fiction as if it were truth." Augustine had always something to say. A bibliography of his sermons and his books is evidence enough. His custom was to take his theme from the Bible. It was the inexhaustible quarry from which his sermons were taken. It was the custom in his day for the sermon to follow the reading of the Scripture and to be based upon the lesson read. That is a good custom still followed by preachers who stand in the great tradition. The Bible was in his blood and in his memory. Its words came unconsciously to his lips. His illustrations were drawn from the Bible. There is not a book in the Bible from which he does not quote. In one of his sermons he says, "Although many of you are well acquainted with Holy Scripture, yet in order to recall

¹ *Apothegms.*

³ *Ibid.*, IV. xiii. 29.

² *On Christian Doctrine* IV. ix. 23.

things to your minds a passage from the Book of the *Acts of the Apostles* shall be read to you, so that you may see for yourselves the model which we wish to have followed. And whilst it is being read I want you to be most attentive, so that after it is over I may be able to set before you what I want with God's grace to have prepared."¹ After the passage was read Deacon Laurence handed the book to the bishop, who said, "Now I myself will read to you, for I much prefer to read this Word of God to you than to discuss the question simply in my own words."² Then he himself read the passage and immediately began his discourse upon it. He confessed that he meditated upon Scripture "during the brief moments I can snatch; and lest I should forget the ideas that come to me I pin them down with my pen."³ That is a good way to do with ideas, "pin them down with the pen." That was the method of Jonathan Edwards, our American Augustinian. It was his custom to wander in the fields with pen and ink in hand—there were no fountain pens in his day. He would return with pieces of paper pinned to his garments on which he had written down his thoughts, which he recopied when he returned to his study.

Augustine was a typical African, hot-blooded, with a keen zest for life. He had a flair for preaching and possessed a sensitive imagination, without which there can be no great preaching. Once he was speaking about the yoke of Christ which Christians must bear. He said:

"A person carrying a heavy burden seems weighed down,

¹ *Sermon CCCLI. i.*

² *Ibid., CCCLI. i.*

³ *On Christian Doctrine IV. x.*

while one with a light one is less weighed down; still both are weighed down. But one who carries none at all seems to walk with his shoulders delightfully free. Now it is not like that with Christ's burden; we have to carry it if we would be lifted up; if you lay it down your burden becomes all the heavier. Nor, brethren, should you deem this impossible. It is possible, perhaps, to discover an illustration of this, something which will enable you to see in material fashion what I am saying, though the illustration is itself marvellous, well-nigh incredible. My illustration is taken from birds. Now every bird carries its own wings. Watch a bird, then, and note how it folds its wings when it lights on the ground, how its wings then rest and the bird lays them along its sides. Now, do you imagine the bird is burdened by them? Let it lay aside its burden and it promptly falls; the less that bird bears its burden the less is it able to fly. Would you, out of compassion, remove that burden? No, if you want to show it compassion you will leave it alone."¹

Henry Drummond used to say, "The business of the preacher is not to prove things but to make people see them," and the great preachers have been able to make people see things. To this end, every means at a minister's disposal should be made use of in the cultivation of the imagination. Sanctified imagination is the organ of faith. It is found everywhere in the Scriptures. "I saw a new heaven and a new earth." "I heard a voice from heaven saying." "The voice of one crying in the wilderness." The great preachers open men's eyes. When he was at his best, Mr. Moody made one see Noah and Herod and John the Baptist and, above all, the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us take the sermon entitled "Good News." The text is "Now I make known unto you, brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein

¹ Pope, *St. Augustine*, page 178.

also ye stand." On the face of it, there is no great demand on the imagination, and yet it is all aflame with the glory and grace of the Gospel, and towards the close he exclaims:

“ ‘ Go ye into *all* the world and preach the gospel to every creature.’ They are almost His last words, ‘ to every creature.’ I can imagine Peter saying, ‘ Lord, do you really mean that we shall preach the gospel to *every* creature?’ ‘ Yes, Peter.’ ‘ Shall we go back to Jerusalem and preach the gospel to those Jerusalem sinners who murdered you?’ ‘ Yes, Peter, go back and tarry there until you are endued with power from on high. Offer the gospel to them first. Go, search out that man who spat in my face; tell him I forgive him; there is nothing in my heart but love for him. Go, search out the man who put that cruel crown of thorns on my brow; tell him I will have a crown ready for him in my kingdom, if he will accept salvation; there shall not be a thorn in it, and he shall wear it forever and ever in the kingdom of his Redeemer. Find out that man who took the reed from my hand, and smote my head, driving the thorns deeper into my brow. If he will accept salvation as a gift, I will give him a scepter, and he shall sway it over the nations of the earth. Yes, I will give him to sit with me upon my throne. Go, seek that man who struck me with the palm of his hand; find him, and preach the gospel to him; tell him that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, and my blood was shed for him freely.’ Yes, I can imagine him saying, ‘ Go, seek out that poor soldier who drove the spear into my side; tell him that there is a nearer way to my heart than that. Tell him that I forgive him freely; and tell him I will make him a soldier of the cross, and my banner over him shall be love.’ ”¹

Augustine had that same genius. There is freedom

¹Gaius Glenn Atkins, *Master Sermons of the Nineteenth Century*, pages 240-241.

and abandon in his preaching. His method of preparation and delivery varied, but his relation to his audience was always personal and intimate. Father Hugh Pope, who has given us an inspiring study of Augustine, says, "He prayed much, he thought much, he studied the Bible on the question he wished to treat of, and then, when he felt clear in his own mind, he spoke from the fulness of an illumined mind and of a heart on fire with zeal for the welfare of his flock."¹ Sometimes he wrote, sometimes he spoke extempore, sometimes he preached and afterwards wrote out the sermon. Speaking of his great sermon on the Trinity, he says, "I preached it to the people and after I preached it I wrote it." This is a method to be commended and has been followed by many of our greatest preachers.

His preaching was always close to the people. "You must pardon me," he says, "if I do not preach you a longer sermon; you are aware of my fatigue."² The people seemed eager to listen. "There is to be another sermon tomorrow, so come with hungry maws and devout hearts."³ Fearful that he had spoken too long, he says, "I have wearied some of you; I can see that. Some of you, however, think I have finished all too quickly."⁴ During a sermon against plagiarism the audience applauded and shouted, and he said, "I see by your acclamations that you realize what I am going to say."⁵ His hearers expressed their approval of a sermon on the resurrection, and he said, "You were right to shout, for you know the Scriptures."⁶ Trying to make himself clear, he said, "Let me give you an example, one which I do not think will be beyond you:

¹ Pope, *Saint Augustine*, page 166.

³ *Exposition* i, 19 on Psalm XXXV.

⁴ *Ibid.*, ii, 28 on Psalm XXXII.

⁵ *Sermon* CXXI. v.

² *Sermon* CCCXX.

⁶ *Sermon* CXXIX. ix.

When we form letters, it is our mind that first fashions them, and then our hands. Your applause shows that you understood that!"¹ When he spoke about how paganism had been suppressed in Rome the people cried, "Let us have it at Carthage as it is at Rome."² Sometimes he was conscious of his own weariness and sometimes of the weariness of the congregation. "Perhaps," he says, "some of you are saying in your hearts, 'Oh! If only he would let us go!'" And again he confides in them that he is very tired and hardly able to speak. He was not afraid of pleasantry in his preaching. He suggests to the people the sermon would be over their heads. Sometimes he threatened them that because of their apparent lack of interest there would be no sermon. During the prolonged exposition of one of the Psalms he gave the congregation a recess, saying, "Go out and take some refreshment, not for your spirits—for your spirits are, I notice, indefatigable; but go out and give some little refreshment to your bodies, the servants of your souls, so that they may still continue to minister to you; and when you are refreshed, then come back to your real food."³

He was in the best sense a popular preacher, his audience answering back to him, understanding his language, catching his accents, interested, amused, instructed, and edified. No wonder the church was lighted up with interest and life. No wonder the people came. "What crowds fill the churches! They are packed to the walls; people press on one another; the mob is almost suffocating."⁴ Again, he says, "I see in what crowds you have come; and you see how I am

¹ *Sermon, John XVIII.* viii.

³ *Exposition i,* 20 on Psalm LXXVII.

⁴ *Ibid., i,* 10 on Psalm XXXIX.

² *Ibid., XXIV.* vi.

perspiring." ¹ But it was not always so. "I feel somewhat sad," he said, "for I do not see so big a congregation as there should be on the feast of the Passion of the Apostles. Did we not know it was their feast, no one could blame us: and if everybody knows it, why so sluggish? Surely you love Peter and Paul." ² When he preached on the *Miserere* the crowd was so large and the noise so great that he begged for silence that his tired voice might be heard.

He died at the age of seventy-six and at a time when the world was breaking up. He was saved from seeing the fall of the city by only a few years. The great work of his life was overthrown by the Vandals who invaded North Africa from Spain. They left behind them a trail of ruin and desolation. During his life the Christian Church had grown strong and had multiplied. When he died there were five hundred bishops in North Africa and twenty years later there were less than twenty, so quickly did the barbarians overrun civilization, leaving the church a desolate ruin. History is ever recording the fact that churches are destroyed, but the church lives on. With the death of Augustine the era of preaching, both in the East and the West, came to an end. The Eastern church has never regained the eloquence of Chrysostom and the church of North Africa has suffered an almost total eclipse. At Rome, which gradually became the center of Christendom, evangelism gave place to ecclesiasticism and priestly exercises were substituted for preaching. The long history from the age of the great preachers to the Reformation is barren of great pulpit personalities. We must wait for pre-Reformation times before preaching again comes into its own. In the reaction from sac-

¹ *Exposition* ii, 9 on Psalm XXXII. ² *Sermon* CCXCVIII. ii.

erdotalism and priestly arrogance Calvin, Luther, Zwingli, and Knox restored to the Christian Church the voice of the preacher, and since then Protestantism has been strong wherever the pulpit has spoken the Word with authority and power. It is by preaching that Protestantism came into being and it will be by preaching that it will endure.

There is one thing that stands out clear in the history of preaching in the early church. Whenever the *kerygma* as proclaimed in apostolic preaching is definite, preaching is vital. Whenever it is obscure, the church loses the voice of authority. There is abundant evidence that the early church often wandered and lost its way. The easy practise of romancing about the past and setting up the work and worship of the early church as the ideal which we should follow is not justified. While it is true that we must ever return to the New Testament as to the fountain from which inspiration for preaching comes, it is a mistake to claim that the faith and order of the early centuries should become the norm by which the church of the present should be judged. Then, as now, the standard of judgment is the Gospel, the apostolic *kerygma*. From the proclamation of the Gospel comes the Didaché, the teaching, the ethics and all church order worthy of the name. Even theology is the handmaid of the Gospel, and the story of the early church cannot be traced without discovering that when the Gospel fails, preaching falters. This should cause no surprise. To the one question—"What must I do to be saved?"—which is addressed to the Christian Church and which the church must answer, the priest says, "Say this," in other words, recite the apostolic ritual; the prophet says, "Do this," in other words, conform to certain commandments; but

the New Testament preacher says, "Believe this," in other words, accept the gift which the Grace of God has offered. We do not need to sacrifice to Him. He is the supreme sacrifice. As we think of the message of the evangel all the flavor of our evangelical hymns comes into mind: "Just as I am, without one plea," "Other refuge have I none," "Nothing in my hand I bring," "O Love that wilt not let me go," "O Light that followest all my way," "O Joy that seekest me through pain," "O Cross that liftest up my head." God Himself is the Saviour and comes for us and for our salvation out of His eternity. The Grace of God hath appeared to all men, bringing salvation.

Our religion is a Gospel. It is an evangel. There is always the note of music and victory in it. When Saul Kane, in Masefield's *The Everlasting Mercy*, found Christ he began to sing:

"The water's going out to sea
And there's a great moon calling me;
But there's a great sun calls the moon,
And all God's bells will carol soon
For joy and glory and delight
Of some one coming home tonight."

When the stupendous, miraculous, impossible fact of the Gospel lays hold upon the soul of the preacher, then preaching becomes articulate.

BOOKS OF REFERENCE

- Adoratsky, V., *Dialectical Materialism*, Martin Lawrence, 1934.
- Ante-Nicene Fathers, The*, Roberts & Donaldson, Christian Literature Company, 1885.
- Atkins, Gaius Glenn, *Master Sermons of the Nineteenth Century*, Willett Clark & Co., 1940.
- Attwater, Donald, *St. John Chrysostom*, The Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee, 1939.
- Asterius, Bishop of Amasia, *Ancient Sermons for Modern Times*, Pilgrim Press, 1904.
- Barth, Karl, *Credo*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1936.
- Barth, Karl, *God in Action*, Round Table Press, 1936.
- Barth, Karl, *The Church and the Political Problem of Our Day*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1939.
- Bell, Bernard Iddings, *Religion for Living*, Harper & Brothers, Publishers, New York and London, 1940.
- Bright, William, *Lessons from the Lives of Three Great Fathers*, Longmans, Green & Co., London and New York, 1890.
- Brooks, Phillips, *Lectures on Preaching*, E. P. Dutton & Co., New York, 1878.
- Browning, Robert, *Bishop Blougram's Apology*, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston and New York.
- Brunner, Emil, *The Philosophy of Religion*, Nicholson, 1937.
- Buchan, John, *The Pilgrim's Way*, Houghton Mifflin Co., The Riverside Press, Cambridge, 1940.

- Bull, Paul B., *Preaching and Sermon Construction*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1922.
- Calvin, John, *The Institutes*, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia.
- Dale, Dr. R. W., *The Atonement*, Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Dawson, Christopher, *Religion and the Modern State*, Sheed and Ward, London, 1935.
- Dixon, W. Macneil, *The Human Situation*, Longmans, Green and Company, New York, 1938.
- Dodd, C. H., *History and the Gospel*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1938.
- Dodd, C. H., *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments*, Hodder & Stoughton, Ltd., London, 1936.
- Dudden, F. Homes, *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose* (Vol. II), Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1935.
- Dwight, S. E., *The Life of President Edwards*, New York, 1830.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo, *Lectures and Biographical Sketches*, Houghton Mifflin Co.
- Expositor's Greek Testament* (Vol. IV), Dodd, Mead and Company, New York, 1910.
- Farrar, Frederic W., *Lives of the Fathers*, Adam and Charles Black, Edinburgh, 1889.
- Fenelon, *Rhetoric, Poetry, History*, Glasgow, 1750.
- Flew, R. Newton, *Jesus and His Church*, The Epworth Press, 25-35 City Road, London, E. C. 1, 1938.
- Forsyth, P. T., *The Cruciality of the Cross*, Eaton and Mains, New York; Jennings and Graham, Cincinnati, 1909.
- Forsyth, P. T., *Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind*, A. C. Armstrong & Son, New York, 1907.

- Green, E. Tyrrell, *How to Preach*, Gardner, Darton & Co., 1905.
- Harnack, Adolf, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries* (Vol. I), G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York; Williams and Norgate, London, 1908.
- Hastings, James, *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics* (Vol. I), Charles Scribner's Sons, New York; T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1908.
- Hatch, Edwin, *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages Upon the Christian Church*, Williams and Norgate, 14 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London, 1904.
- Heim, Karl, *God Transcendent*, Nisbet, 1935.
- Henry, Matthew, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible* (Vol. I), Fleming H. Revell Company; Funk & Wagnalls, 18-20 Astor Place, New York.
- Hitler, Adolf, *Mein Kampf*, Reynal & Hitchcock, New York, 1939.
- Hoskyns, Edwyn Clement, *Cambridge Sermons*, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London; The Macmillan Company, New York, 1938.
- Hymnal, The*, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1933.
- Jefferson, Charles E., *The Building of the Church*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1913.
- Jowett, J. H., *The Preacher, His Life and Work*, Hodder & Stoughton; George H. Doran Company, New York, 1912.
- Kittel, D. Gerhard, *Lexicographia Sacra* (two lectures), Cambridge, 1937.
- Lake, Kirsopp, *The Apostolic Fathers*, Putnam, 1919.
- Lindsay, Thomas M., *The Acts of the Apostles* (Vol. II), T. & T. Clark, 38 George Street, Edinburgh, 1885.

- Maclaren, Ian, *Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush*, Dodd, Mead and Company, New York, 1895.
- Manson, T. W., *A Companion to the Bible*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1939.
- Merejkowski, Dmitri, *The Death of the Gods* (Translated by Bernard Guilbert Guerney), The Modern Library, Inc., New York, 1929.
- New York Times*, December 23, 1940.
- New York Times Magazine*, September 8, 1940.
- Newman, John Henry, *Sermons Bearing on Subjects of the Day*, Rivingtons, London, Oxford, Cambridge, 1869.
- Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Christian Literature Company, New York, 1888.
- Oman, John, *Concerning the Ministry*, Student Christian Movement Press, 58 Bloomsbury St., London, W. C. 1, 1936.
- Orr, Dr. James, *Revelation and Inspiration*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1910.
- Parker, Joseph, *The People's Bible* (Vol. 18), Funk & Wagnalls Company, New York.
- Pater, Walter, *Appreciations; With an Essay on Style*, Macmillan, 1910.
- Peabody, Francis Greenwood, *Mornings in the College Chapel* (Second Series), Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston and New York, 1907.
- Plato, *The Laws*, Random House.
- Pope, The Very Rev. Father Hugh, *Saint Augustine of Hippo*, Sands & Company, Ltd., 15 King St., Covent Garden, W. C. 2, London.
- Robinson, H. Wheeler, *The Christian Doctrine of Man*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1911.

- Schaff, Philip, *History of the Christian Church* (Vols. II and III), Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1930.
- Sclater, J. R. P., *The Public Worship of God*, George H. Doran Company, New York, 1927.
- Second World Conference on Faith and Order, The*, edited by Leonard Hodgson, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1938.
- Seeley, J. R., *Roman Imperialism*, Roberts Brothers, 1889.
- Shaw and Salmond, *The Works of St. Augustine*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh.
- Shelley, Percy B., *To a Skylark*, Walter Scott, London.
- Stoddard, Jane T., *The Psalms for Every Day*, Hodder and Stoughton, 1939.
- Streeter, Canon, *The Primitive Church*, Macmillan, 1929.
- Tennyson, Alfred, *In Memoriam*, Macmillan.
- Tennyson, Alfred, *The Golden Year*, Macmillan.
- Wright, F. A., *Fathers of the Church*, George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., Broyway House, 68-74 Carter Lane, E. C., London, 1928.

INDEX

- Acton, Lord, 44
 Alexandria, School of, 103-104
 Ambrose, 156; father of church song, 204; personality, 200; testimony of Augustine, 201; see Chapter VI
 Ambrosius, 116
 Apologetics, 109, 120ff.
 Apologists, Christian, see Chapters III and IV
 Apologists, Greek, see Chapter III
 Apologists, Latin, see Chapter IV
 Apology, 90
 Apostolic Fathers, see Chapter II
 Arius, 156
 Asterius, Bishop, 164-165
 Athanasius, 156
 Augustine, 17, 27, 57, 156, 165ff.; his conversion, 211; intolerant, 215; see Chapter VI
 Barnabas, 71ff.; see Chapter II
 Barth, Karl, 64, 125-127
 Basil, see Chapter V
 Bell, Dr. Bernard Iddings, 70
 Brooks, Phillips, 30, 54, 108, 164, 177, 213
 Browning, Robert, 35, 122
 Brunner, Emil, 127
 Buchan, John, 154
 Bull, Father Paul B., 186
 Bunyan, John, 213, 221
 Bushnell, Horace, 158
 Calvin, John, 88
 Canon, The, 50, 159
 Cappadocia, 166
 Catacombs, 157
 Celsus, 93-95ff.
 Chalmers, Thomas, 213
 Christian Apologists, see Chapter III
 Christianity, simple, 158; social, 121ff., 140ff., 145, 166ff., 181ff., 209; spread of, 56-58; success of, 143
 Chrysostom, 156, 165ff., 175ff.; personal appearance, 178; preaching of, 179-180; see Chapter V
 Church, The, 88, 136ff., 150ff., 194, 203
 Churchill, Winston, 45, 85-86
 City of God, 194
 Civilization, 195
 Clement of Alexandria, 91, 105, 107, 121; see Chapter III
 Clement of Rome, 50, 51, 60, 66-67; First Epistle of, 66, 74; Second Epistle of, 66, 74, 86; see Chapter II
 Codex Alexandrinus, 53
 Codex Sinaiticus, 53
 Coleridge, Samuel T., 217
 Communism, 151
 Cornelius, 25
 Council of Nicæa, 158
 Creedal formula, 69
 Cross, the, 37
 Cyprian, 91, 125ff., 132; ecclesiastic, 134; martyrdom of, 144; see Chapter IV
 Dale, Dr. R. W., 15, 159, 213
 Dawson, Christopher, 147
 Denny, James, 38
 Didaché, 19, 20, 35
 Didaché, The, 51, 68
 Diognetus, Epistle to, 51, 55-56, 68-70, 73

- Dixon, Prof. W. Macneile, 18, 63
 Dodd, Prof. C. H., 19, 20, 30-31
 Drummond, Henry, 213, 224
 Dudden, F. Homes, 210
 Eddington, Sir Arthur S., 147
 Edinburgh, 138
 Edwards, Jonathan, 177
 Einstein, Albert, 139
 Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 185
 Emperor worship, 192
 Ethics, 37, 71ff.
 Eusebius, 53, 104, 106, 110, 129
 Extra ecclesiam nulla salus, 136, 153
 Fall of Rome, 156, 190, 193
 Farrar, Frederic W., 52, 103-104, 116, 129, 132-133
 Fathers, Apostolic, see Chapter II
 Felix, Minucius, 97
 Fenelon, 188-189
 Flaubert, 218
 Flew, Principal R. Newton, 14
 Formula, creedal, 69
 Forsyth, Dr. P. T., 24, 35
 Garrick, 222
 Gibbon, Edward, 57
 Gnosticism, 98-99
 God, kingdom of, 17-19
 Grace, gospel of, 212
 Greek Apologists, see Chapter III
 Greek philosophy, 103
 Greek rhetoric, 159ff.
 Green, T. H., 43
 Gregory Nazianzen, 156, 170ff.; see Chapter V
 Harnack, Adolf, 58-59, 78, 81
 Hatch, Prof. Edwin, 159ff.
 Heim, Karl, 127
 Henry, Matthew, 116
 Heresy, 98-100
 Hermas, 50-51; see Chapter II
 Hexapla, 111
 Hitler, Adolf, 219
 Holmes, Oliver Wendell, 30, 219-220
 Ignatius, 50, 51, 60-61, 66-67; see Chapter II
 Inge, Dean, 114
 Inheritance, family, 162
 Irenæus, 91
 Jefferson, Charles, 48, 187-188
 Jerome, 196ff.
 Jowett, J. H., 39
 Judaism, 61-62
 Julian the Apostate, 158
 Justin Martyr, 56, 91, 101, 106-107, 122; see Chapter III
 Kerygma, 19, 20, 21, 22, 27, 28-29, 30, 33, 34, 35, 36, 39-40, 43, 46, 47, 65, 69
 Kingdom of God, 17-19
 Kipling, Rudyard, 131
 Kittel, Prof. D. Gerhard, 46-47
 Koinonia, 15, 88, 136, 150
 Lake, Kirsopp, 49-50
 Lamb, Charles, 217
 Latin Apologists, see Chapter IV
 Lincoln, Abraham, 45
 Lindsay, Principal, 33
 Literature, importance of, 218
 Lucian of Samosata, 96
 Luther, Martin, 21, 109
 Maclaren, Alexander, 31
 Maclaren, Ian, 46
 Martyr, Justin, 56, 91, 101, 106-107, 122
 Masefield, John, 230
 Materialism, 146
 Matheson, George, 116
 Merejkowski, Dmitri, 100-101
 Merrivale, 57
 Ministerial students, choosing, 162ff., 187

- Minucius Felix, 97
 Monasticism, 165, 193
 Moody, Dwight L., 224ff.

 Naziism, 191
 Newman, Cardinal John
 Henry, 87-88, 89
 Nicæa, Council of, 158

 Old Testament, 32, 41, 62
 Oman, John, 40, 69-70, 108
 Oral tradition, 34
 Origen, 82, 91, 102, 106-107,
 123; see Chapter III
 Orr, Dr. James, 41, 53

 Paganism, 58-59
 Pantænus, 104
 Papias, 51; see Chapter II
 Parker, Joseph, 116, 118ff.
 Passion narrative, 36
 Paul, 27, 28, 42
 Peabody, Francis G., 124
 Pentecost, 15, 16, 17, 21, 32
 Persecution, 60, 78-79
 Peter (quoted), 15, 16, 21-22,
 23-25, 42
 Philosophy, Greek, 103
 Plagiarism, 131
 Plato, 40
 Pliny the Younger, 79
 Polycarp, 50, 51, 61, 68; see
 Chapter II
 Pope, 135
 Preaching, allegorical method,
 112ff.; Bible, 75ff.; direct,
 86; homiletical rules, 217;
 informal, 80; limitations, 44-
 45; New Testament, 83-84;
 non-professional, 82-83; not
 taught, 221; popular, 227;
 repetition, 43; scriptural,
 110ff., 178, 207, 222; with au-
 thority, 27
 Prophet, 41

 Race, Third, 62
 Repentance, 39
 Resurrection, 38
 Revelation, 126
 Rhetoric, 159ff., 217
 Robertson, F. W., 39
 Robinson, H. Wheeler, 37
 Rome, Fall of, 156, 190, 193
 Ruskin, John, 177

 Schaff, Philip, 57, 91, 99, 102
 School of Alexandria, 103-104
 Schweitzer, 17
 Sclater, Dr. J. R. P., 205-206
 Shelley, 195
 Simpson, Dr. P. Carnegie, 117
 Smith, George Adam, 115
 Social Christianity, 121ff.,
 140ff., 145, 166ff., 181ff., 209
 Spread of Christianity, 56-68
 Stephen, 27, 28
 Streeter, Canon, 81
 Success of Christianity, 143

 Tennyson, Alfred Lord, 17, 31
 Tertullian, 91, 125ff., 143-144;
 his style, 143; controversial-
 ist, 134; see Chapter IV
 Theodosius, Emperor, 202
 Third Race, 62
 Trajan, Emperor, 80

 Utopia, 17

 Valens, Emperor, 169
 Vandals, 156, 228

 War, 130
 Whately, Archbishop, 52, 222
 Whitefield, George, 177
 Whyte, Alexander, 116
 Words, importance of, 218
 Wright, Henry B., 200
 Wright, Professor, 194

THEOLOGY LIBRARY
 CLAREMONT, CALIF.

325