

# The Presbyterian GUARDIAN

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**Apologetics and  
Evangelism**

Robert K. Churchill



**Shanghai Diary**

Egbert W. Andrews



**Educational  
Evangelism**

R. B. Kuiper



**The Christian's Life  
of Prayer**

W. Benson Male



**Orthodox  
Presbyterian  
Church News**



**Life of Jesus Christ**

Leslie W. Sloat



**Church Membership  
and the Church  
Creed**

Johannes G. Vos



**Guardian News  
Commentator**



*The Jesus spoken of in the New Testa-  
ment was no mere teacher of righteousness,  
no mere pioneer in a new type of religious  
life, but One who was regarded, and re-  
garded Himself, as the Saviour whom men  
could trust.*

—J. Gresham Machen



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## Educational Evangelism

By R. B. KUIPER

IT HAS been said repeatedly in the course of this conference that the message and the method of Evangelism are inseparable. That can hardly be disputed. More specifically, the message determines the method. With that in mind I shall speak of both at once.

I wish to stress just one point—that Evangelism must be educational, that in our evangelistic preaching we must teach men the Word of God.

While it is no doubt true that Educational Evangelism is required in every age, our age has no more crying need. There is greater need today of Educational Evangelism—with much emphasis on the adjective—than was the case even as little as one generation ago.

The evangelistic preaching of such men as Billy Sunday and Gypsy Smith was decidedly emotional. Perhaps it was too emotional. Yet there was some justification for their emotional emphasis. In their day the average man had at least a casual acquaintance with the gospel. The preacher had a right to assume that his audience possessed at least an elementary knowledge of Christian theology, particularly of the Christian way of salvation. Therefore he could proceed rather quickly to seek to move men to accept the gospel. Today the situation is quite different. Men by and large know next to nothing of the gospel. Tell a man that he must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and there is a likelihood that he will know neither who Jesus Christ is nor what it means to believe on Him. In a word, men must be taught the way of salvation from the very bottom up. The average American is in almost as great need of being taught the elements of Christian truth as is the average Hottentot.

There is a second reason why we must today stress Educational Evangelism. This second reason may seem to contradict the first, but it actually complements it. While the people of our land on the whole are abysmally ignorant of the Bible and Christianity, they are not nearly so ignorant of other matters. Secular education has progressed in the last quarter of a century. Almost everybody gets at least a high school education, and the

colleges are crowded far beyond their doors. In a word, the level of general intelligence has risen considerably. In consequence men are not moved by an emotional religious appeal as they once were. On the contrary, they are unwilling to accept the Christian religion without first being told what it is and being shown that it is reasonable.

The notion is rather prevalent that faith is a gamble, a leap in the dark. But that is precisely what saving faith is not. Faith versus reason is a false antithesis. Faith presupposes knowledge. Knowledge is indeed an essential element of faith.

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**A** GROUP of some 50 representatives of theological seminaries and Bible training schools met in Louisville early in January to discuss problems connected with the teaching of evangelism. Among those present was Professor R. B. Kuiper, of the department of practical theology at Westminster Theological Seminary. We herewith bring to our readers the substance of an extemporaneous speech made by Professor Kuiper during the course of the conference.

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One cannot believe a proposition without knowledge of its content. For one to say that he believes the Bible from cover to cover, means precisely nothing if one has no knowledge of what is between the covers of that book which is indeed the Word of God.

Saving faith involves knowledge of a number of propositions, but is itself more than that. It is trust in a person, the person of Jesus Christ. But how can one trust Him without knowledge of Him? It would be foolish for a man to entrust his life-savings for safekeeping to a complete stranger. It would be the height of folly for one to commit himself, body and soul, for time and eternity to someone of whom he knows nothing. No sane person would do it.

Permit me to use an old illustration at this point. A certain house had a basement without windows. Its en-

trance was a trap door. One day the father of the family was busy in the basement, while his little daughter was playing around the open trap-door. He could see her in the light, but she could not see him in the dark. He called to her, "Jump through the open door, and Daddy will catch you." Instantly she jumped and was, of course, caught in her father's strong embrace. That story has been used to illustrate the notion that faith is a leap in the dark. In reality it illustrates the truth that faith is not at all a leap in the dark. Literally the little girl made a leap in the dark, but in a very real sense she did nothing of the kind. She recognized her father's voice. She was positive that her father was reliable. She knew that her father loved her. She knew a great deal, and because of her knowledge she leaped. Likewise trust in the Lord Jesus Christ springs from knowledge of Him.

How much knowledge is essential to saving faith is admittedly difficult to say. Yet some statements can be made without hesitation. I shall make two.

In order to believe on Christ in the Scriptural sense one must needs know that He is God. Nor is it sufficient to hold that He is the Son of God in the same sense, albeit in a higher degree, in which all men are sometimes said to be the children of God. No, He is the Son of God in a unique sense, in the sense that He is Himself very God. In the language of historic Christian theology, He is homo-ousian with the Father—a term which I surely would not use in evangelistic preaching, but which does express an essential Christian doctrine. Only to God may one abandon himself for eternal life. To trust in a mere human being for salvation amounts to ascribing divine honor to a man. It constitutes idolatry.

Again, in order to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, one must have some understanding of His atoning death. One must know that His death on the cross was a vicarious sacrifice for the expiation of sin by the satisfaction of divine justice. In the words of Paul, one must know that He who knew no sin was made sin for us in order that we might be made the righteousness of God through Him. The third chapter of Galatians contains two quotations from the Old Testament, in both of which occurs the word cursed. "Cursed is every one that continueth

not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." That means you and me and every human being under the sun. But again we read: "Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree." That means Christ crucified. When He died upon the tree He bore the divine curse which was due to us because of our sins. When He called out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?", He was experiencing the pains of hell. To be forsaken of God is the very essence of hell. When He uttered the cry of anguish He was at the very bottom of the bottomless pit. I deserved to be there, and so did you. But in infinite love He endured all that for such ungodly sinners as you and me. I do not say that these few sentences exhaust the doctrine of the atonement, but they certainly do express in simple terms the very heart of the teaching of the Word of God on that subject. An understanding of it is prerequisite to faith in the one and only Savior.

Many seem to think that the aim of evangelistic preaching should be to move men by an emotional appeal to accept Christ as Savior, and that afterwards those who have accepted Christ should be instructed in the Christian religion. But fact is that the unsaved must first of all be taught the gospel. Our evangelistic preaching should be definitely and emphatically educational. But, lest I be misunderstood, I would add that evangelistic preaching may never be matter-of-fact. Most emphatically it should be warm, even passionate. Believe it or not, there is such a thing as passionate teaching.

That men need to be taught also after their conversion deserves much emphasis. I am thankful that it has been stressed at this conference. The members of our churches must be instructed in the Word of God as long as they live. Our preaching should be much more instructive than it is. We must build up believers in the faith. This cannot be done without stressing Bible doctrine as well as Bible ethics.

Did it ever strike you that the great commission, our Lord's missionary command, twice tells us to teach? To be sure, two different words are used in the Greek, but both are very properly translated teach. The Lord commands us to teach all nations . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever He has commanded us.

He demands Educational Evangelism.

The church has but one task,—to teach men the Word of God. Un-speakably sad to say, the church of our day is neglecting that task. That is the reason why the church is in so bad a way. The ox knows his owner and the ass his master's crib, but the members of Christ's church neither know nor consider. That is also the reason why the world finds itself in so appalling a plight. This is largely the church's fault. It has not taught the nations

the Word of God. It is permitting them to perish for want of knowledge. No wonder that they face ruin, perhaps extinction.

Unless the church teaches men the Word of God, all its efforts, also those efforts which are called Evangelism, will prove futile. If, on the contrary, the church diligently teaches men the Word of God, God will be faithful to honor His Word. Men will be saved. The church will be built. The kingdom will come.

## The Christian's Life of Prayer

*Private Prayer is a Means of Grace*

*The Christian May Not Neglect*

By W. BENSON MALE

A WELL-ROUNDED prayer life is the capstone of Christian development. Although prayer is among the first acts of the new-born Christian, the place it holds in the mature child of God is immeasurably more full and rich. Prayer becomes his very life!

In private, in public; at home with his family, or abroad in business or pleasure; in the throes of disaster, or in the ease of prosperity; in life or in death—the Christian lives to pray. No problem, no concern, no joy, no plan is too small for much prayer.

The Scriptures abound in examples of the prayer life of God's saints. Enoch "walked with God," Abraham often "fell on his face" before the Lord, and he builded an altar at Bethel, "the house of God," to worship Him. "Isaac went out to meditate in the field at eventide," and Jacob met the Lord whilst on the lonely journey from his father's house, and again on his return to Canaan in deathly fear of Esau, his brother. The trials Joseph endured drove him to the Lord in the temptations offered in Potiphar's house, the desolate hopelessness of the Egyptian prison, the voluptuousness of the Pharaoh's palace. Moses was alone with God forty days and forty nights, and the glory of the Lord glowed from his face when he returned to his people. And the time would fail me to tell of Joshua, and of Samuel, and of David, and of Solomon, and of Daniel, and

of Nehemiah, and of Peter and Paul, as well as an innumerable host of believers from their day to the present which has found strength for the day from communion with the Sovereign God, the Sympathizing Savior, and the gracious Holy Spirit.

THE Rev. W. Benson Male is pastor of First Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Denver, Colorado. Mr. Male was the guest speaker this year at the annual Day of Prayer held at Westminster Seminary February 5th. We are glad to have this article from his pen on the subject which is vital in every Christian's experience.

In spite of the great host of witnesses bearing testimony to the necessity and efficacy of prayer, and in spite of the abundance of prayer invitations and promises in the Bible, communion with the covenant God is sadly neglected among professing Christians. Far, far too often the period set aside for listening to the Lord's voice through the reading of God's Word, and for responding to Him in deep devotion, is passed by. The pressure of work, or the visiting of friends, or the call to pleasure tend to make earthly things bigger and more important than the things of heaven. Rugged determination to be faithful in one's duty to God is required for