

Social action is simply obedience to the command of God. We should not evangelize *through* social service, but rather see social action as *part* of evangelization. We repent from the disparity of wealth we have caused or permitted, and stand condemned by the Bible for our lack of concern for the needy. Our concern and sacrifice must be as wide as God's, and we must all cooperate to fulfill the needs. We recommend ongoing consultation between relief organizations, dissemination of help available through evangelical agencies, and the matching of opportunities of service with offers for service.

EVANGELISM AMONG THINKING PEOPLE

Os Guinness

Mr. Guinness, Huemoz, Switzerland, formerly with L'Abri Fellowship, is now a freelance writer.

"Man is obviously made for thinking." "Thought constitutes man's greatness." "Man's greatness comes from knowing he is wretched. A tree does not know it is wretched." These sayings of Blaise Pascal, the French genius and apologist, remind us that when we approach man as a thinking being we see him simultaneously at the point of his greatness and at the point of his wretchedness — great because made in the image of God, wretched because given over to the futility of his darkened mind in rebellion against God. So to consider and practice evangelism among thinking people is to know God as Creator, to confront the uniqueness and dilemma of man and face the deepest questions and challenges of our generation.

In introduction let me briefly say three things. First, in speaking of "thinking people" rather than "intellectuals" I am deliberately putting the stress on whole people in real-life situations — those whose faculty of understanding is a dynamic and integral part of their lives. For too many people, "intellectual" is a term of description which is unhelpful and misleading, supporting the myth of a neutral rationality and suggesting a rarefied world of the mind, detached from practical issues and everyday living.

Second, I presuppose without apology that the Christian who knows God through Jesus Christ as the Truth is a man who thinks in believing, and believes in thinking. To require a negation of the mind as part of knowing "the foolishness of God" is to miss the irony and meaning of Paul's point. It also opens up a dangerous shortcut to the foolish and disqualifies the Gospel unnecessarily from being the good news that it is.

Third, the confines of a short paper militate more against an adequate treatment of this subject than most. Much is omitted, much merely presupposed, and much touched on with only regrettable inadequacy.

1. A unique opportunity

It would be difficult to express adequately the excitement of the present moment for anyone who loves God's truth and seeks to relate it to our time. Five hundred years of virtual European dominance in the world have ended, and with it is disappearing a whole complex of accepted ideas and traditions. It is the challenge of a new, emerging civilization, as yet only sensed, which makes this a unique moment. New value, new principles, new patterns of thought are in demand. Our generation is in a shopping mood for answers.

The vital role of thinking people at such a time should be obvious. Already the private and public importance of creative thinkers is ex-

aggerated. This will increase. From the establishment viewpoint a nation's knowledge and know-how will be its basic resource, education will be a major industry, and all will be directed by an elite. From the standpoint of liberal or radical dissent, independent thought and critical judgment are needed controls against unthinking mass movements or totalitarianism. For the average man searching for diversion and entertainment in a crowded market of personal philosophies and life-styles, the thinker is the often unacknowledged source of his pre-packaged beliefs and fashions.

The present is also important because many of the former obstacles to Christian faith are disappearing. Much of the opposition to Christian truth is in evident disarray and unbelief has rarely been so unsure of itself.

A selective example of this, and in some ways the most significant from a purely intellectual viewpoint, is the current transformation of Western consciousness. For centuries secular humanism has been the open rival of Christianity and the only real candidate for replacing Christian truth as the foundation for a modern culture. Suddenly it has overreached itself. What we have witnessed in the 1960s is the self-confessed "Striptease of Humanism" (Jean Paul Sartre). The notions of humanist man's autonomy, self-sufficiency, and a high value for individuality and freedom, have been exposed and found groundless. With astonishing speed a new consciousness is emerging. The optimism of liberal humanism and the promise of dialectical materialism are still powerful politically but intellectually they are discredited.

In the ensuing clash of epistemologies (the "mechanist" versus the "mystic") the various structures of intellectual thought are becoming shaken to the foundation. Long maintained subjections to Christian belief are suddenly devoid of force. Long-cherished certainties of unbelief have proved insubstantial, even dangerous. Reason and faith are coming to be seen as blood-brothers rather than arch-enemies. In a surprising about-turn the case for unbelief is at its weakest for centuries, while the philosophical, moral, and historical justifications for Christianity have rarely been stronger.

This is our opportunity: God's truth alone provides the key to the many dilemmas confronting man at the close of this turbulent century.

2. *The general eclipse of a Christian mind*

To understand this unique opportunity is not to say that Christianity is therefore recognized by contemporary thinkers as the answer to the modern dilemma. Sadly, the reverse is true; and we must not move out to speak unless we know something of the practical causes of this situation. At few periods in Christian history has the faith of the believer appeared so deficient and intellectually disreputable — and this is not because of the offence of the Cross, but because of an eclipse of the Christian mind.

It is all the more striking when one remembers the debt owed, under God, to thinking men in the early church (from the Apostles John and Paul down to Origen and Augustine) or to the young intellectuals with minds on fire who formed the spearhead of the Protestant Reformation (such as Martin Luther and John Calvin). The eclipse of a Christian mind can be noted at any of three places.

a. *Lack of a clear, Christian voice* — Thinking people today, outside Christian circles, are almost universally unaware of a credible Christian voice. Ignorance, misconceptions, and prejudice have combined to create an abysmal caricature. Many are repelled by what they have known at first hand (Nietzsche, Carl Gustav Jung, and Ingmar Bergman, for example, are non-Christian thinkers who are all sons of Christian ministers) and most have never heard enough to respect, let alone consider seriously.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's eighteenth-century assessment is frequently echoed today. ("One of the palliatives modern Christianity has to offer is that it has managed to create a verbal jargon without meaning which is supposed to satisfy everything except reason.") Gordon Rattray Taylor predicts that soon "Christianity will only provide a solution for tender-minded conservatives." Theodore Roszak, a historian surveying the present scene, describes modern Christianity as "socially irrelevant if privately engaging." Professor R.C. Zaehner says, "Few intelligent young men have ever turned to the churches since the eighteenth century."

b. *The dissipating effect of a misguided liberalism* — One question Christians have always faced is: How far can Christian truth be translated into the thought-patterns of other philosophies or religions? Acclimatization to non-Christian thought can lead to assimilation of non-Christian premises, and so to compromise, if not capitulation. In the so-called practice of "spoiling the Egyptians" the motive of the Early Church was never that the pagan thinker might merely *respect* the Christian, the motive was always that the Christian thinker might *reach* the pagan to win him to Christ.

The shame of much modern theology is that it has no such excuse. Along with the uniqueness of Christian truth, evangelism itself is being discredited. For almost 200 years a defining feature of much theology has been its compromise with the presupposition of naturalistic philosophy. Such theology has been called a "New Theology" but really it is the product of secular premises baptized in Christian terminology. These theologies are short-lived because they have no life beyond the life-span of their parent philosophy. They are the lingering echo of the Hegelian, existentialist, positivist, or idealist premises behind them. Being themselves the product of secular thought, they can never be considered as answers to secular dilemmas.

Christian theology thus becomes merely the Christian's way of looking at things. Evangelistic and missionary endeavor is toned down to being open-ended dialogue. What passes for a defense of the faith is what previous ages would have seen as a denial of the faith. Such liberalism dissipates the power of the Gospel, and the end of this road is the loss of truth and the decay of witness.

c. *The stifling effect of a misguided conservatism* — If a part of the Church has progressively surrendered to the premises of modern thought, another large part has made the equally unfortunate, though opposite, error of withdrawing into isolation. Failing to analyze the currents of secular thought but instinctively realizing the threat they represented, many churches have saved themselves from compromise only by a reflex movement of retreat.

But the cost of withdrawal into high-cultural isolation has produced a brand of faith marked by social and intellectual insecurity. This in turn creates many problems, only one of which is the withering of effective witness among thinking people. The Lordship of Christ is strictly confined within a narrowing spirituality. Questions are not encouraged. Wider implications of faith are ignored. Culture is not taken seriously. Christian thinking is limited to thinking on Christian topics. There is almost no field of Christian discourse and discussion. And the cutting-edge into the social, political, and intellectual world beyond is minimal. Such misguided conservatism stifles the power of the Gospel, and the end of this road is social and spiritual containment.

Thus at the very moment when twentieth-century man is most aware of his dilemma and is most in need of answers and truth, historic Christianity has been effectively shorn of its greatest strength — its claim to be true. Is Christianity true? The rehabilitation of this claim, and the pursuit of its implications for a powerful Christian mind, must be the consuming passion of the Christian thinker today. No other single question could be so explosive in the contemporary situation. Politically, for example, a conviction of what is absolutely true or ultimately real is a most subversive idea in a day of false totalitarian truth or mass image-making. For our purposes too, it is the pursuit and practice of truth which is the key to evangelism among thinking people.

3. *Evangelism and the practice of truth*

If the issue of truth is central to our challenge to modern thought, then a demonstration of truth must go hand in hand with our declaration of truth. Truth is to be proclaimed and it is also to be practiced. God's work must be done in God's way; God's truth must be shared on God's terms. This sense of integrity (of being "true to truth") is especially vital in a day like ours with its relativistic values. "Means" have become "ends." The question, "Is it true?" has been replaced by, "Will it work?" or, "How will it sell?"

But if Christianity is true, it works only because it is true; it is not true because it works. This is far more than a play on words. The entire uniqueness of Christianity lies in this difference. The Living God is there or he is not there. Either he has spoken or he has not spoken. These things are either true or false. They are not merely *true for us*. If this titanic claim is to be taken seriously, its implications must be reflected in all we say and are. Absolute integrity is the only fitting vehicle for absolute truth. To fail in this accidentally or deliberately, in smaller or greater ways, in our message or in our methods, is to risk placing ourselves under the charge of Paul's question, "Will you never stop falsifying the straight ways of the Lord?" (Acts 13:10).

Not only do we dishonor God and falsify his truth, we also hinder those we seek to reach. Thinking people are not generally more honest (or less honest) than most other people, but they are often more perceptive and critical. Many of them are marked by a deep-rooted mistrust of professional evangelism. Much of this arises from our careless disregard for the practice of truth.

This might be considered in two areas.

a. *The practice of truth and the question of balance* — Truth is one, but it is often expressed to us in terms of polar truths (e.g., God's sovereignty and man's significance). Here the practice of truth involves the balance of practicing both aspects of truth at once. Our most common errors are not usually those of deliberate misrepresentation or manipulation, but rather of accidental imbalance, or unconscious omissions or extremes. To examine ourselves periodically might be helpful.

For example, there are certain poles of balance especially important for the apologist-evangelist, beyond each of which is a disastrous extreme on either side. Notice that in most cases an occupational hazard or a character trait will pull us towards one extreme or the other. Have we thought these through? Are we maintaining them? Are we practicing a balance between ...

(i) Reason and faith in our own understanding and our appeal? (avoiding the extremes of dry rationalism or emotional irrationalism which vitiate much apologetics or evangelism).

(ii) Presuppositions and evidences in our handling of truth? (avoiding the extremes of appealing to either unsubstantiated premises or question-begging evidences which are a sad feature of much apologetics or evangelism).

(iii) Involvement and separation in grappling with non-Christian thinking? (avoiding either compromise or remoteness and irrelevance).

(iv) Stressing the divine and stressing the human side of responsibility? (avoiding the perils of a theological determinism or a virtual Christian humanism).

(v) Careful thought and warm feeling in our approach? (avoiding arid intellectualism or emotional manipulation).

(vi) Clarity for the truth and compassion for the man? (avoiding a polemic spirit or a deferential vagueness).

(vii) Intelligibility and freshness in our expression? (avoiding a complicated, sterile precision, or "emotional connotation words" and private jargon).

(viii) Spontaneity and structure in method? (avoiding the extremes of being spiritually haphazard or tiresomely and self-consciously methodological).

(ix) Personal involvement and wise detachment in dealing with people? (avoiding the extremes of being emotionally bound up with or impersonally remote from them).

These nine areas, if followed through, pick up many of the basic questions with which today's apologist-evangelist must grapple.

b. *The practice of truth and the question of inconsistency, error, or wrong* — My aim here is not to level criticisms, but to plead for a spirit of humble self-examination before God, that in the light of his searching standards we may review what we say and the way we say it. Together we can then go forward, mutually encouraged, corrected, and challenged, to demonstrate still more clearly the truths we declare. By God's grace we must put behind us much of the image of salesmanship and anti-intellectualism, even manipulation and fraudulence which is attached to the public understanding, or misunderstanding, of what we are about.

Without this, can we expect people to take us seriously? How are thinking people really to believe what we say? Can we have integrity in our own eyes, let alone before God? Perhaps the sting of this can best be felt by raising the questions which are typical reactions to the evidence for truth which we present in practice. Behind them all is the haunting query, "If Christianity is true, why . . .?"

For example:

(i) *After visiting a local church* . . . Why the fear of questions? Why is the faith of the church unable to answer the questions of the university? Why do Christians have such a schizophrenic mind, keeping a compartment for faith and a compartment for life? Why does so much witnessing seem to be motivated by anything but truth? By subconscious guilt ("how many people have you witnessed to this week?"), or by unbiblical appeals ("win the world by . . .")? Why have Christians confused their social mores with God's absolutes and made so many of them into taboos? Why such a general denial of the arts and the particular misuse of the arts for the sake of evangelism? Why the polarization between the "simple Gospel" and the "social gospel"? Why such concentration on minor points (such as smoking and drinking) to the virtual ignoring of major principles and issues (such as justice, mercy, violence, race, poverty)?

(ii) *After listening to individual Christians* . . .

Why are intellectual questions dismissed as evasions of moral problems? Why are doubts so often suppressed? Why are truth and love, truth and experience, truth and beauty usually posed as opposites? Why are so many Christian opinions so parallel to secular opinions, but wrapped in religious language (e.g., current apocalypticism, or the unhealthy fascination with the supernatural)? How can I know Christianity is true if it requires such a leap of faith? What difference is this from a drug experience or from make-believe? Or,

(iii) *On encountering professional evangelism* . . .

Why such constant disparagement of the mind? Why so much appeal to the emotions? Why so little content presupposed on which to decide? Why all the talk of "souls" and so little of whole people? Why the obvious exploitation of the testimony of the famous? Why is it so often a case of the more simplistic the message the more sophisticated the techniques? Why the need for always being bigger and more successful? Why the creation of Christian "celebrities" and "one man denominations"? Why the unconscious manipulations or the open fraudulence in public appeals for money, or in prayer letters?

A host of other questions spring to mind, which we must ask ourselves. For example, why have so few intelligent people seriously considered Christ today? (Can it partly be because our apologetics are too academic, too polemic, and almost completely confined to an inter-seminary debate among Christians?) Why do non-Christians generally raise questions and see errors before Christians do? (e.g., the rising disquiet over the grave dangers of confusion and commercialism as Bible sales become "big business" was raised by secular voices first; and they are not slow to notice the blatant materialism and sometimes open lies which characterize much advertising in certain Christian magazines.)

Part of our failure to get thinking people to take the Gospel seriously is born of a credibility gap. We claim Christianity is true — a claim

which is awesome by contemporary standards, but then we whittle down our claims by the patent incongruity of our practices of the truth. The way we operate speaks louder than what we say. Without the practice of truth, evangelism is in danger of becoming a giant institutional mouth, or as E.M. Forster dismissed it scornfully, "Poor talkative little Christianity!"

4. *Approaching the thinking person*

a. *Approach him personally.* The thinking person is not approached best in a crowd, precisely because his thinking puts a high premium on independent thought and private judgment. A public, professional approach is therefore least effective, or effective mostly in the opening stages of stimulating the search, or in the closing stage of making a conclusion. Lectures, sermons, seminars, group discussions, lending books, all have their special place, but there is no substitute for talking man to man. In doing this, sensitive, spiritual, and intellectual discernment involves at least three things.

(i) *Understanding a general anatomy of the unbelieving mind* — Just as a medical doctor sees each particular patient against the background of his general studies and his knowledge of previous cases, so the apologist-evangelist approaches each person as an individual but understands him against the background of the biblical picture of the unbelieving mind.

Passages such as Genesis 3, 4, 11; Romans 1, 2; II Thessalonians 2 should be studied carefully, especially with an eye to such key concepts as why each man has his own worldview, what is the purpose and place of natural revelation, how the rebellious mind refuses to bow to God's truth, in what sense judgment is the consequence or the logic of a man's settled choice, and what is the point of contact with those who recognize neither God nor the Bible.

The heart of this understanding centers around man's *inversion of truth* (man's "grasping the truth in unrighteousness," Rom. 1:18). This is the process whereby man turns God's truth on its head and uses it for his own purposes, against God. Yet he is still unable to deny the reality of the created universe around him and the image of God within him. So sinful man is inescapably caught in a tension between what he is and what he seeks, between the pull of the truth of God's world and the pull of the pseudo-truth of his own worldview (his world within God's world).

We therefore have a frame for helpful discernment. The more consistent a man is to his own worldview the less close he is to God's world, and therefore the more uncomfortable he is and the more he is forced to *face his dilemma*. On the other hand, the less consistent a man is to his own worldview the closer he is to God's world, and the more he must *find a diversion* (to save himself from recognizing the truth and having to bow to God). Every man is somewhere between the pole of dilemma and the pole of diversion, though the great majority of men are obviously nearer the pole of diversion. Few have either the consistency or the courage to approach the logic of their presuppositions and face the dilemma of a world without God.

(ii) *Learning the language of our contemporaries* — With history as our example and with the incarnation as our ideal, we evangelicals, who

spare no effort to train a missionary to speak a foreign language, must be as concerned to learn the intellectual, cultural, and artistic language of those around us in our own countries. This cultural language-learning must not be confused with the style of the "trendy evangelist" whose stock-in-trade includes handy references to current trends, films, books, and popular songs. The latter is a cheap relevance. What is needed is persistent prayerful grappling with the premises, images, expressions, patterns, and traditions of those around us. Only as we really understand them will we effectively relate to them.

(iii) *Listening to the individual as a person* — Listening is the opening practice of compassion and courtesy in evangelism. The Christian is a man committed to taking truth seriously and taking people seriously. This distinguishes true evangelism from a sales technique, from proselytizing, and from simplistic methodologies which approach all men in the same way. (All of which thinking people are quick to detect.)

Listening is not a means to an end. It is a value in itself. The good listener is like an expert and appreciative wine-taster, who savors the wine and knows at once the soil, the year, and the quality of the vintage. As we listen, we should carefully discern: Does he have other needs which must be met first (food, medicine, comfort, a place to stay)? What is his worldview and philosophy of life? (Is it implicit or explicit?) Where is the treasure of his heart guarded? What is his deepest longing, aspiration, or hope? (With some thinkers, thought is a diversion or a profession; with others it is a serious commitment and a consuming passion.)

God's care for the individual is at the heart of Christianity. By contrast, indifference is the most common way that man denies his fellow-man today. Thus our aim is not to exploit his views, but to get to know him. So the moment of listening, the active giving of ourselves to another man made in the image of God, is often the first opportunity to show this care.

b. *Push him to the point of conviction.* The conviction of truth and the conviction of sin should not be separated. So when one has found where a man is in his heart and mind (seen, biblically, as one) our task, with God's help, is to push him towards conviction. This we do by a deep challenge (not necessarily verbal) to be true to the logic of his presuppositions and his worldview. We know that this will increase the tension between who he is and what he seeks until a breaking point is reached. The man is then faced with the bankruptcy of his own worldview and the challenge of God's truth as his only solution and salvation. In praying towards this end, it is helpful to remember three things.

(i) *The "logic of a man's presuppositions" is more often found in life than in words.* Mere verbal arguments, even if "successful," can too easily be seen as sophistry ("Isn't it, after all, your business to know the answers and arguments?" — they say.), and many critiques knock down only a caricature of a man's idea. This leaves the man himself untouched. True personal knowledge is not detached from life anyway, so "logic" must be brought to bear on "life" and "life" brought to bear on "logic." If we forget this we assume more responsibility than we should.

(ii) *Don't always answer questions, ask them!* It is sobering to reflect that the great bulk of Christian apologetics is aimed only at the tiny pro-

portion of people who think and care deeply enough to consider the questions we attempt to answer. Books, lectures, discussions, seminars reach only those who think in the way catered for by books, lectures, discussions, seminars. The vast majority of people are untouched and indifferent.

Thus the problem of the Christians's failing to answer questions is a real one, but limited in effect. The larger problem is that few questions are being asked at all. Most of our contemporaries have little interest in answers of any kind. Unless we learn to raise questions, as well as resolve them, we only hope to foster the monolithic indifference which is our greatest problem anyway. This would involve two things.

First, the use of questions to raise further questions. Questions must be asked of people where they are. If only a minority read serious books, then serious books raise questions only for a minority. If more are affected by mass communication and the audio-visual arts (such as television, music, drama, poetry, cartoons, etc.) then we must use mass communications and audio-visual arts to raise questions. (Incidentally, this does not mean that the media best for asking questions are also the best media for answering them. Often the reason they are so good for raising questions is the very reason why they are no good at answering them!)

This calls for an imaginative, sensitive cooperation of Christians in the various arts. If we were to practice the Lordship of Christ over culture we would be producing naturally a flow of plays, films, novels, poems, and songs, all dealing with universal human questions, treating modern issues and raising a thousand questions on every side. These would have no integrity and little appeal if evangelism were their only motivation (the trouble with so much "Christian art" already) but as one side of their total purpose their value to evangelists would be enormous.

For example, we have seen Sir Kenneth Clark's brilliant television series "Civilization" and Dr. J. Bronowski's only slightly less subtle humanist television tract "The Ascent of Man." Who will plan and produce a cultured overview of civilization from a wise, balanced Christian point of view? Of course, it goes without saying that having raised questions we must in honesty prepare ourselves to answer them.

Second, the use of questions to push towards conviction. Questions are vital here for various reasons. Because a thinker may go on to follow the logic of the question into areas beyond our knowledge and into problems beyond our understanding — areas of logical implication which we have, perhaps, neither the wisdom nor experience to enter. Moreover, it is imperative that a man sees and feels the logic of his presuppositions for himself. Merely stating his dilemma to him will not impress a man. He must know it by his own wrestling and struggling (a complete study of Christ's use of questions is very instructive at this point).

(iii) *Use his prophets.* Paul quoted the Old Testament Scriptures to Jews when he was in the synagogue, and quoted Cretan poets to Athenian philosophers on Mars Hill (and not vice versa). In the same way, when speaking to a man who rejects or ignores the Bible's authority, it is useful to make a point which he can hardly ignore by citing one of his own prophets in a telling way. If used rightly (i.e., not lifting the quote out of

context, etc.) nothing speaks to modern man so tellingly as the searching novels, plays, and films of sensitive men. For many people, it was this warning from "their own side" which forced them to begin the search which led to faith in Christ.

As one pushes a man towards the point of conviction, relying on the convicting and convincing ministry of the Holy Spirit, two things should be borne in mind.

First, search for the appropriate pressure point in a man's thinking. Conviction has nothing to do with trapping a man in countless logical inconsistencies. The pressure point is that place of deep inconsistency or unfulfilled aspiration where the cherished purpose of a man's life is guarded, and where in consequence God's revelation cuts across him most forcefully. Two men could easily have the same deep logical inconsistency, but maybe for only one of them does it matter sufficiently to be a pressure point.

Second, gently apply pressure until it becomes a point of true conviction. As a man approaches the danger point (the moment when he perceives the logic of his presuppositions) he can go only one of two ways — evasion or conviction. He will either turn on his heel, or fall on his knees. It is when the bankruptcy of his own position is smartingly understood that he is ready for the last step. In all this approach there must be no appeal that is not in tune with truth.

c. *Point him to faith in Jesus Christ.* At first sight this third step is the most obvious and should require the least elaboration. Yet today it deserves perhaps the most. Exactly here — in the step of becoming a Christian — a remarkable deficiency of understanding is apparent today. This is behind the appalling numbers of young "converts" falling away. It is producing a weakened Christian mind and is drastically blunting our witness to intelligent people.

New Testament faith is spoken of as a "persuasion" of the truth (Acts 17:4) and it is important to appreciate something of the levels of understanding pre-supposed in this persuasion. To miss one of these levels is not to make conversion invalid, but it does critically weaken a man's understanding of his faith — sometimes disastrously. Four particular levels are discernible; each a level in the sense that the higher builds on the lower and includes it as it moves on. (Thus a level is *not* a stage.)

(i) *First level presupposed: understanding one's critical dilemma* — The Gospel is not felt to be good news to the man who does not feel his bad situation. Without this awareness, man's autonomy means he will not bow to God, so to speak "neutrally" to him is to invite him to set himself up as judge and "play god" with God's truth. His needs are stressed first, not because the Christian *believes* in God because of his need, but because he *dis* believes in his previous worldview because of his need. If this deficiency in understanding is carried over into the Christian life it breeds an attitude of indifference and self-sufficiency — the opposite of "There, but for the grace of God, go I."

(ii) *Second level presupposed: understanding God's truth as the answer* — This level entails an adequate understanding of the difference made because of who God is and what he has done. Christian presuppositions are explained and expounded, first to meet the specific needs which

the individual's worldview hadn't and couldn't answer, and then to go on to inform all of life and its questions with Christian answers, values, and principles. That Christianity gives these answers and sheds this light does not in itself prove that Christianity is true, but it does fuel the fires of the urgency of this question.

(iii) *Third level presupposed: understanding God's answer as the truth* — This is logically different, though not always practically different from the second level. Today it strongly needs emphasis. This level of understanding entails a serious examination of Christian claims and evidences and their appropriate verification (only tackled, please note, when levels one and two are presupposed, i.e., man's autonomy is shattered — level one — and he is seeing things from a Christian framework — level two). The questions of this level are satisfied only when a man can believe in God, knowing he has sure and sufficient reasons, and therefore he can know *why* he believes *what* he believes. In fact, what many Christians mean by their "leap of faith" is that they have missed out on this level altogether.

(iv) *Fourth level presupposed: the understanding regenerated and renewed* — This level alone overlaps with the experience of becoming a Christian, but it is not in a vacuum. It is the logical outcome of the other three levels, all gathered up within it, so that a man bows before God in repentance and faith, and receives not only the forgiveness for his sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit but a renewing of his mind. (To follow this on to the development of a Christian mind leads us beyond our purpose.)

In conclusion, we must never forget that in attempting to reach thinking people for Christ, there are no shortcuts, no gimmicks, no ready-made formulas. No evangelist or Christian can have thinking people as his "specialty." Only men of God's truth will win men to God's truth. Normally, there will be no substitute for sheer hard work, studying, praying, thinking, and outthinking our contemporaries to the glory of God.