

- D. When the distance is greater than one hour of traveling time, I do one of two things:
1. Either I do not accept the invitation
  2. Or I graciously accept the hospitality offered and make the best of it.
- E. As far as extended meetings at a distance are concerned, I have stayed with families in their homes, and I have stayed in motels.

I have had some very wonderful experiences in homes (especially in those in which family members went about their business and allowed me to tend to mine), and I have had some bad experiences. On the whole, I prefer a free, natural family, or a motel. But I encourage you to go your own way and to gather your own war stories!

### III. Thirdly, let me share with you SOME OBSERVATIONS REGARDING PREPARATION OF THE SUBJECT AND CONTENT OF MESSAGES

- A. "What should I speak about?" This is one of the most difficult questions a speaker faces, one that cannot be avoided. Nevertheless, this agony of decision must be borne by every conscientious person.
- B. Perhaps some negative considerations can help us narrow the field a bit.
1. Ordinarily, we should avoid speaking on a church's distinctive doctrines, unless we are in agreement with them. I say "ordinarily," because an occasion might arise on which we would be asked to present a different viewpoint. But chances of this are rather slim!
  2. Ordinarily, we should avoid making our first opportunity to speak at a church an occasion for a message which will arouse unnecessary hostility on the part of the people or the pastor.

Of course, there is some resistance every time the gospel is preached in power and every time the claims of Christ upon every Christian are presented with conviction, but these are hostilities that we cannot help. But surely certain hostilities can be foreseen and avoided.

3. Ordinarily, we should avoid repetition of a message to the same (or essentially the same) audience.

Some preachers feel that messages should never be repeated, but that each new occasion of speaking should call forth a new message. With such a view I respectfully differ. I believe that a message into which I have invested a great deal of study, prayer, time, and mental energy can be used in a number of situations with many groups of believers. Furthermore, I have used such messages five, ten, twenty, or more times over the years with much blessing.

Accordingly, I would propose the principle:

A GOOD BIBLICAL MESSAGE, BROADLY APPLICABLE, MAY BE USED WITH PROFIT AMONG MANY GROUPS OF PEOPLE, AND NEED NOT BE USED ONLY ONCE AND SUBSEQUENTLY FILED FOR POSTERITY!