

How Small a Whisper: Evangelistic Messages and Outlines by Roger Carswell (Baker Book House: Grand Rapids, MI, 1989) (26 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

1. God's Revelation

God has revealed himself to mankind in five basic ways. First, through creation—the material word; second, through individual conscience—the unspoken word; third, through the Scripture—the written word; fourth, through Christ—the living and loving Word; and fifth, through Christian conversation—the experienced word. (p.11)

2. Growing Old

Everyone is Growing Old. Dana Robbins said that old age is “when actions creak louder than words.” Yes, growing up soon gives way to growing old. (p.24)

3. Hitting the Headlines

Randolph Churchill, son of Sir Winston, once said that the only time he would hit the headlines would be when he died. However, he was wrong. Since he died on the same day that Robert Kennedy was assassinated, Kennedy took the headlines and Churchill made only a few lines in the middle pages! But what difference does it make whether one's death is newsworthy? (p.25)

4. Repentance

A rabbi was once asked by a follower, “When is the best time to repent?”

“Repent the day before you die,” said the rabbi.

“But I don't know when I will die,” was the reply.

“Repent *today* then!” (p.26)

5. The Christian Life

Alexander Whyte said “the Christian life is a series of new beginnings.” (p.32)

6. The Grime Human Nature

Entering a course of sin is often like buying a one-way ticket to disaster. Authorities once set to work to clean up Sir Walter Schott's statue in Edinburgh. No matter how hard they tried, the statue remained dirty-looking. Then they found that the stone itself was dark-colored, and no amount of scrubbing would ever change that! How like human nature—grimy in appearance and character! (p.35)

7. Conscience

The Greeks define conscience as “the pain you feel when you do wrong.” John Trapp said, “Conscience is God’s spy and man’s overseer.” However, since it is possible to silence one’s own conscience, it is not always an accurate guide to proper behavior. (p.35)

8. Beware of Sin

Beware of sin’s defilement. It blinds, deafens, and deadens the soul. Sin ultimately condemns its victims both in life and in eternity. (p.37)

9. Interrupting

Don’t we all hate being interrupted? According to a well-circulated story, one day Randolph Churchill was talking to his father when Sir Winston interrupted him. Randolph spoke again, only to receive the reply, “Don’t interrupt me when I’m interrupting!”

10. Our State of Deprivation

“Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling.” Archbishop Temple wrote, “The only thing we contribute to our salvation is a load of sin.” It is only when we realize that our state is desperate that we can come in submission to Jesus, pleading forgiveness from the One who delights to pardon and cleanse. Arrogance and pride have no place in the individual who would willingly bow heart and head before the mighty King Jesus, who was willingly crushed by our sins.” (p.45)

11. Searching for Signs

So frenzied was this lost man that he pleaded, “...but if one goes to them for the dead, they will repent.” Such an argument is based on the false view that it is lack of evidence that prevents people from believing. The evidence, however, is convincing. Christ did live, die and rise again. It is not that people cannot believe, but that they will not. Jesus said that it was an evil and adulterous generation that seeks after signs, but that this resurrection from the dead would be the only sign given (see Matt. 12:39-40). (p.53)

12. We are a New Creation

The Bible says, “...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Cor. 5:17). Aims, affections and ambitions totally change when Jesus comes to live within the life of someone who

trusts him as Savior. Life and language become new. New Christians find that they have rich spiritual lives and God has become precious.” (p.54-55)

13. Eternal Security

In March 1984, William McConnel, the deputy governor of the Maize Prison of Northern Ireland was shot to death outside his house as he left for work one morning. Three weeks before his murder, he had written a letter expressing a premonition of death that he had felt. He concluded by saying, “Finally, let no one be alarmed as to my eternal security. In March 1966, I committed my life, talents, work and actions to Almighty God in sure and certain knowledge that however slight my hold on Him may have been during my years at school, university, and the prison service, His promises are sure and His hold on me complete. Nothing can separate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” The letter was read at McConnel’s funeral service. (p.55)

14. Limitations of Money

There is nothing wrong with material wealth as long as one is aware of its limitations. Money can buy a bed, but not sleep, books, but not brains, food, but not an appetite, a house, but not a home, medicine, but not health. Money can also buy sinful pleasures—but it can never purchase salvation’s peace. (p.57)

15. The Ever nearing Finale

God knows not only the date of our birth, but also the date of our death. One day we must pass through the turnstile of death, the great interrupter. Personal ambition and involvement cease the moment God blows that final whistle. There is a day coming when the doctor will put down his stethoscope for the last time, the minister will preach his last sermon, the builder will pack away his tools forever, and the farmer will plow his field for the final sowing. That day hastens on. Time stands still for none of us. (p.59)

16. World’s Greatest Scoop

When the mayor of Chicago spent a day dressed as a tramp and living with vagrants, the Chicago Tribune described the event as “The World’s Greatest Scoop!” The editors were wrong! Long ago, the Holy God condescended to live in this world as a man. (p.64)

17. Forgiveness

In May 1987, thirty-nine American seamen were killed in the Persian Gulf when an Iraqi pilot missiled their ship, the U.S.S. Stark. Newspapers carried a picture of the son

of one of these seamen, a shy five-year-old boy, John Kiser. He was standing with his hand on his heart as his father's coffin was loaded onto a plane to take him back to the U.S.A. His mother said, "I don't have to mourn or wear black, because I know my husband's in heaven. I am happy because I know he is better off." Later on, she and young John sent a letter and an Arabic New Testament to the pilot of the Iraqi plane, addressed: "The men who attacked the Stark, Dad's ship, in the hope that it will show that even the son and the wife do not hold any grudge and are at the same time praying for the one who took the life of our father." (p.67)

18. Searching in the Light

A policeman curiously watched a drunk looking for something under a street light. He asked the man what he was looking for. "My billfold," he replied. "It slipped through a hold in my pocket." They looked together, but with no success.

"Where do you think you lost it?" inquired the policeman.

"Down that road" replied the drunk, pointing into the distance.

"Then why aren't you looking down there?"

"Because there aren't any street lights there. I'd never find it!" (p.76)

19. The Humbug

A group of mischievous students once stuck parts of different insects together and gave the completed "bug" to a famous professor of zoology. "Can you identify this?" they asked. He studied the creature and then, looking up, said "Yes. It's a humbug!" Neither can we deceive God—our all-knowing Creator. (p.77)

20. Without God

The actor Peter Sellers said of his life, "The realization is less than the expectation. I tell you straight, all I am trying to do is get through the day. And when I cry, I cry for yesterday." (p.78)

21. Edison's Path

If you were to visit the Florida home of Thomas Edison, you would be intrigued by a path in his garden called "The Walk of Friendship." What makes it unique is the fact that each stone was contributed by a different acquaintance of the great inventor. (p.81)

22. Secret Sin

Bishop J.C. Ryle said: "Open sin has killed its thousands, but secret sin its tens of thousands." (p.85)

23. The Shame of Pride

In Freiberg, Germany, there is a beautiful organ in a magnificent Gothic cathedral. One elderly church organist had always treated the instrument with great pride and care. While practicing one day, he was approached by a man who asked if he could play the organ for a while. A curt refusal was given. The stranger sat in the church pew and listened to the older man. Then he asked again, and later a third time. Finally the old organist slid a little along the organ bench, allowing the younger man to play. As he did, such beautiful music filled the church that the old organist was startled and asked the young man's name. "Mendelssohn," was the reply. "To think I nearly didn't allow the master to play the organ!" said the old man in adulation. (p.106)

24. The Three Rules of Prayer

D.M. McIntyre followed three rules of prayer in his life: (1) pray till you truly pray; (2) pray till you are conscious of being heard; (3) pray till you receive an answer. (p.143)

25. Obedience

While still a student, F. B. Meyer woke early one morning and looked out of the window in his residence hall. He noticed a light in the room of young C.T. Studd, the England cricketer who eventually became a missionary. "What were you doing up so early?" asked Meyer later that day.

"Last night I read the words of Jesus, 'If you love me, keep my commandments.' Since I do love Jesus, I got up to go through the Gospels to make sure I was keeping the," explained Studd. (p.150)

26. Ready for the Gospel

John Wesley, the great evangelist and founder of Methodism, knew this when he wrote in his journal: "We came to Newcastle about six, and walked into the town. I was surprised: so much drunkenness, cursing and swearing (even from the mouths of little children) do I never remember to have seen and heard before, in a small compass of time. Surely this place is ripe for Him who 'came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.'" (p.152)