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THE BRISTOL ASSEMBLY.

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The Bristol Assembly is declared by one who saw it to have been "an unusually strong and forceful body of men." The equivalent of this is said by somebody of every General Assembly that meets, from which we may conclude that the mental comparison is not with other Assemblies of our Church, but with bodies of men outside our Church, and that our Assemblies are uniformly composed largely of able men, which conclusion is doubtless true.

It is not the purpose of this paper to give a record or a history of the acts of the fifty-second General Assembly at Bristol, for this has already been well done by our religious press, and besides the writer had not the privilege of being a spectator of the Assembly in session. It is intended merely to note, and to comment upon, some of the more important matters which were before the Assembly, and there are so many a selection will have to be made. Moreover, all that is written, is written from the viewpoint not of an ecclesiastical expert, but of a practical pastor in the field.

The Bristol Assembly was pre-eminently a business body; it made record time, at least for recent years, finishing its work in exactly one week, and yet slighting no important matter. Those at all acquainted with deliberative bodies will understand how much of this dispatch must have been due to the presiding officer, and we are prepared to believe what was claimed for him.

THE OLD EVANGELISM.

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The great work demanding the attention of the churches is the evangelization of this nation. The greatest hindrance to the world's evangelization is the attitude of indifference of the churches at home. If the Christian community was thoroughly Christianized, it would be an easy task to get money and workers to carry the gospel to all the world. How thoroughly unchristian are our so-called Christian communities! How seemingly powerless is our organized Christianity! How little the church affects the community in comparison to what it should do! Instead of predominating the community with religious ideals, it is permeated with worldly policies that show the overwhelming influence of secular life. How inactive the majority of every church membership! As a test read over the statistical tables in the minutes of the last Assembly. Notice the number of accessions by profession of faith.

A CONDENSED TABLE.

Here is the approximate condition set forth in condensed form. The facts are given by Synods; the last number gives the number of churches that averaged one or more accessions each week; the third, gives the number of churches that averaged one or more accessions each month; and the second, gives the number that did not have a single accession last year on profession of faith; the first, the whole number of churches:

THE SYNOD	Number Churches	None in a Year.	1 or More a Month.	1 or More a Week.
Alabama.....	224	95	12	0
Arkansas.....	112	52	12	0
Florida.....	106	53	5	0
Georgia.....	245	118	29	1
Kentucky.....	174	73	19	1
Louisiana.....	92	45	19	0
Mississippi.....	285	157	17	1
Missouri.....	150	53	16	1
North Carolina.....	468	210	51	2
Oklahoma.....	75	38	11	0
South Carolina.....	285	124	22	1
Tennessee.....	202	72	37	0
Texas.....	413	258	36	3
Virginia.....	511	233	37	4
Total.....	3,392	1,581		

A NEW ERA.

We seem to be now entering a new era. The results of a great crowd in a union effort were never as great as they seemed to be. If a city of 100,000 has a great union meeting and report 5,000 converted it seems to be a great success, but likely there are 45,000 at least still unconverted. The minority of the unsaved are reached by this plan. We need an evangelism adapted to our times, and it is the old evangelism that our Lord used and demonstrated in his earthly ministry. In order to secure this old evangelism three advance steps should be made.

1. The pulpit should take on a more evangelistic accent. We do not need less doctrinal preaching—but more doctrine in evangelistic form. All the great truths of the Scripture are definitely evangelistic if given that turn in their presentation.

2. The church should take on a more evangelistic attitude. It should awake to the fact that it does not live for itself alone. The church exists largely for the outside world. Its every word should be an invitation. Its every act should be a welcome. Too many churches seem to approve the prayer of the old man, who said, "Lord, bless me and my wife, my son, John, and his wife; us four, and no more."

3. The individual Christian should make the evangelistic ap-

proach to the unsaved individual. In a sense, every Christian is in the ministry. If even one-half of the Christians were soul winners, the table given above would be greatly changed.

OUR LORD'S PLAN.

Our Lord began his public ministry with personal work. John the baptizer called attention to Jesus and two followed him. Jesus talked with them and each one brought another. Personal work is the principle and policy of all Christian work as our Lord taught it. It is always a personal, hand-to-hand, heart-to-heart work.

God deals with the race by individuals—not by crowds or by the herd. God made Adam, commissioned Noah, called Abraham, appointed Moses, anointed David, crowned Solomon, converted Paul and called you. The history of the race centers around individuals. Humanly speaking, the work of the church rests upon individuals. The reason for the marked success of any minister in spiritual work will frequently be found to be explained by the fact that about him are gathered a group of loyal, active personal workers.

THE FACTORS.

The factors in personal work are three—the Holy Spirit, the Holy Word and the human worker. All three of these are necessary.

a. The Holy Spirit is the source of all spiritual life and blessing. He dispenses all gifts, directs all labors and secures all results. He is sent—given to dwell in all Christians and in the church as a whole. He is the infallible and only teacher.

b. The Word is the instrument that He always uses. He may work without it, but surely works with it—it is “the sword of the Spirit.” It really seems as indispensable as Himself. Now the place you give the Bible in personal work will depend upon the way you value it. If you regard it as God’s Word, and message to us, you will use it boldly and it will defend itself. If you

regard it otherwise you will use it timidly and with little effect. Remember, it is "The Sword of the Spirit." You are to use it for Him.

c. The individual worker is almost as important. He is to be commissioned by the Holy Spirit, and is to give the message the Spirit sends. History and experience show how clearly this is God's plan.

When Cornelius prays an angel comes not to tell him how to accept salvation, but to tell him where to find a man who can tell him all about it. Saul, the new convert, had to get his ideas from Ananias.

THIS ACTIVITY NECESSARY.

The activity of personal work is necessary both to the individual Christian and to the church as a whole. The evangelistic church is always an evangelical church. The church with its Bible in hand busy about soul-saving is not perplexed about doctrinal questions. Such a church believes that its mission is to save and edify, and not waste time in foolish disputes. Such a church believes that Jesus is the Saviour of lost men, and that the Bible is God's message to lost men. The church that neglects soul-saving may become intellectual, but will never become spiritual. Only a spiritual church can meet man's deepest need, for man's deepest need is salvation from sin.

WHY?

If personal work is God's plan and necessary to the life and growth of the church, why is not the church alive and at work?

The answer to this question is easy. The whole church needs a great awakening. It needs to be revived. It is not in proper condition. Commercialism and materialism have formed a scum over its eyes, it cannot see; and deadened its nerves, it cannot feel.

The church needs a great revival. When we speak of revival do not think of sinners, but of inactive saints. At least four points need attention.

a. The church needs a revival of faith; and by this I mean not belief in doctrine, but a faith that works. Our faith should show fruit. Faith is the condition by which the early church could show wonders. Why cannot the experiences of the early church be repeated today? Why not plan great ingathering of sinners and realize our plans?

We plan to raise so much money by our budget system, why not plan to add 300 souls to the number of saved? Do we believe the gospel decrees of God, such as "he that believeth not shall be damned"?

b. The church needs an revival of conscious responsibility. The individual believer is the representative of God to the sinner. The church is God's training school to fit men and women to become soul winners. The church stands with the gospel between lost men and God. Every Christian should remember that he is a channel or a barrier to the outgoing power of the Holy Ghost. Are you opening or blocking the way? We are dealing with tremendous facts of life, sin, death and judgment. Our responsibility is very great.

c. The church needs a revival of love. We need more of the sympathy like Christ showed to the lost. Do you know of any church suffering from too much spirituality either in the pulpit or the pew? Some churches are suffering from too much intellectuality. If one-half of the brain power of the church could be converted into heart power it would be a great help to the work. The church needs the power of a holy enthusiasm, born of the Holy Spirit, and enlightened by the word of God. You cannot reason men into the kingdom of God, but you can love them into it.

d. The church needs a revival of holiness. It needs a deeper spiritual life. Too many have forgotten to pray, alas! forgotten how to pray. The church is too far out in the world. Your power as a Christian personal worker will be in proportion to your religious character. Be sure you are saved and then be sure you are sent, and then go and God will go with you to bless and make your work successful.

If we could bring about this fourfold revival we would move the work of the church greatly forward.

SUGGESTIONS.

1. Study and pray with a view to becoming a personal worker. Supply yourself with leaflets and helps both for yourself and for the purpose of reaching others.

2. Begin to make a list of those whom you would like to lead to Christ. If you do not know whose name to put first make it a subject of earnest prayer, and you will be surprised how God will bring names to your memory.

3. Begin a systematic, tactful effort to teach these, by personal interviews or written messages, and all the while praying earnestly and regularly for them.

4. Report what you are doing to your pastor and ask his advice and help, and thus greatly encourage him.

5. Organize in your church classes to study personal work, and thus beginning to train a company who can do more for the work in a regular way than can be accomplished by any forced processes.

This is the old evangelism that is greatly needed today.

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