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## THE PRESENT EVANGELISTIC MOVEMENT.

BY THE REV. J. R. THOMPSON, NEWBURGH, N. Y.

Special evangelistic effort for the spiritual awakening of the church and for the conversion of the masses of the people is one of the cheering features of the times. These efforts are not confined to the ordinary services of the Sabbath in the sanctuary, but consist of a special work by distinct denominations within their own churches, or by union meetings in which Christians of different church relations co-operate. In New York city various churches have, for some time, been holding special meetings on week-days for the purpose of reviving a greater interest in religious matters. In other cities union meetings of different denominations have been held for the same purpose and with encouraging success.

A new impulse has been given in this line of work by the visit to this country of certain ministers of the Church of England who have been laboring in that country in evangelistic work. This work in England is not unlike the movement begun by the Wesleys a century ago; but differs from it in the fact that it is carried on *inside* of the Episcopal Church, while Wesley went *outside* and built up a new denomination, which has had a marvellous growth in the Christian world. The representatives of this new movement, who have arrived in this country, are holding daily meetings in different Episcopal churches, which are crowded with Christians, business-men, and the common people, many of whom attend no regular place of worship.

The first series of these meetings was held in Newburgh, N. Y., during the last two weeks of October, and was conducted by Rev. W. Hay Aitken, Superintendent of the England Parochial Mission Society. He is a gentleman of fine presence, of a cultivated and persuasive manner, chaste and elevated in his style of rhetoric, and evangelical, earnest, and searching in his presentation of divine truth. Several years ago he was a pastor of a congregation in Liverpool, but was induced by Mr. Moody, the well-known evangelist, to devote his time

to this work it is important there should be a systematic visiting from home to home, in order to ascertain the non-churchgoers; an organizing of missions and schools, where adults and children can be gathered to hear the Gospel; the setting the whole machinery of the church in motion in that line of work; and in addition to all this, an intense love for souls, a burning enthusiasm in the work, and an unflinching faith in final success. In the words of Bishop Simpson,—“The church must grope her way into the valleys and courts and purlieus of the city, and up the broken staircase, and into the bar room, and beside the loathsome sufferer; she must go down into the pit with the miner; into the fore-castle with the sailor; into the shop with the mechanic; into the factory with the operative; into the field with the farmer; into the counting-room with the merchant. Like the air, the church must press equally on all surfaces of society; like the sea, flow into every nook of the shoreline of humanity; and, like the sun, shine on things foul and low as well as fair and high; for she was organized, commissioned, and equipped for the moral renovation of the world.”

Availing ourselves of the present opportunity for evangelistic work; judiciously employing the divinely-appointed agencies for the upbuilding of Christ's kingdom; exerting all the powers at our command either in the ordinary church services or in special efforts outside of the church, we may confidently hope for a spiritual quickening in our own souls, a deeper religious work in the church, a thorough reformation in society, the conversion of many of the now unchurched, and the hastening of that longed-for day when “all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him.”

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*THE SINS OF GOD'S PEOPLE ARE MADE BLESSINGS TO THEM.*

BY THE REV. J. M. FOSTER, CINCINNATI, OHIO.

Can good come out of evil? Can sin be made to work for holiness? Yes. “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight.” God is not the author of sin. It originated in the lustful spirit of the creature. “He that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning.” “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man; but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. And lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

Sin, then, is the conception of the proud, lustful spirit of God's creatures, either human or demoniacal. God did not will the existence of sin. It is contrary to His will. He hates sin. He cannot look upon it. But He willed to permit sin, that He might have an occasion to display His glory. He allowed sin to have dominion over this world that He might magnify His grace in destroying it. “Where sin

abounded, grace did much more abound. That as sin reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto life eternal, by Jesus Christ our Lord." Sin made it possible for God to reveal Himself to men as He never could otherwise have done. His goodness is revealed in creation and providence, but His mercy could only be discovered in pardoning sin. "His works do show Him clothed to be, and girt about with might;" but it is in subduing the heart of the rebellious sinner and converting him into a "willing" servant of God that "the day of His power" is seen. The heavens glorify His wisdom in choosing the best means for the best ends. But in the scheme of redemption, whereby God can be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly, we have the mystery of godliness, which confounds the angels of light. His punitive justice could never have been known except in punishing sin. Blessed be God, that which in its own nature is most to His dishonor, is converted into an occasion for discovering the perfectness of His glory. God makes use of sinful instruments in accomplishing His purposes, though they mean it not so. "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." Satan, whose motto is, "evil be thou my good," in his vilest and most diabolical plots, is unwittingly carrying out the eternal purpose of God. He tempted our first parents and led the race captive at his will, exclaiming in triumph, "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty? Shall the captive of the terrible one be delivered?" But this was the occasion of God's sending His Son to break the power of the arch-traitor, and exalt His people above the angels to sonship with Himself. Satan tempted the Lord Jesus Christ, and his unsuccessful assault prepared the Saviour for succoring those who are tempted, "being tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." Satan inspired Judas to betray our Lord and the Jews to demand His crucifixion; but they were only the blind agents by which God gave His Son to be a propitiation for our sins. "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Just as the Romans made use of the fury of lions to devour criminals in their theatres, so God used the covetousness and ambition of the Chaldeans to punish rebels against His kingdom. Daniel's four beasts, representing the Chaldean, Medo-Persian, Greek and Roman dynasties are successively devoured by one another. God made Assyria the rod with which He chastened Israel for their sins, according to Isaiah x., 5, and then He broke the rod in pieces. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee, the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain." The sons of Jacob sinned grievously in selling their brother Joseph to the Midianites. Their design was malicious. They did it for envy. But God meant it for good. This was His way of bringing Joseph to the throne of Egypt. Thus He fulfilled the prophecy of his dreams when his brethren came and bowed down before him. Thus He made

provision for preserving His people during the seven years' famine that came upon all the land. And thus He brought to pass what was revealed to Abraham in the prophetic symbol of "a burning lamp and a smoking furnace," when Israel went down into Egypt. Balaam's perversity in responding to Balak's impious request to go and curse Israel was made the occasion of his uttering one of the most beautiful prophecies in the Book respecting the Messiah and His kingdom. Judah and Tamar made themselves abominable in the sight of the Lord by their criminal intercourse. They had no thought higher than the gratification of this sensual desire. And yet God used their lust in perpetuating the seed from which sprang the Redeemer. Jonah sinned against the Lord in refusing to go to Nineveh and proclaim His message. The Lord met Him in a storm at sea, as he fled to Tarshish. He confesses to the seamen that he is the cause of their peril, and, at his request, they cast him overboard. But God carried him safely to the shore by means of "a great fish." The moment he was thrown into the sea it was calm. This convicted the sailors. They believe in Jonah's God and offer sacrifice. They return at once to Nineveh and report what they had done. While they are yet speaking, Jonah appears in the streets of the city, crying, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed." It is a voice from the dead. God raised him from a watery grave. They believe his message. The whole city fasts. They repent, confess, and are saved. Jonah's sin furnished the evidence that secured conviction. The unbelief of the Jews was the occasion of preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, just as the sun setting for one nation is rising to another. "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?"

God makes the sins of His people a blessing to them 1. *Their sin is made the means of discovering their total depravity.* The heart is the fountain, the conduct is the stream. Impurities in the stream originate in a corrupt fountain. "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." Before David fell into sin in the matter of Uriah's wife, he seemed to be too unconscious of the fact that he was carrying within him "an evil heart," one "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," so wicked that he could not know it. He seemed to feel that his heart was clear as the sunlight, that no hypocrisy was there. And we frequently find him appealing to God for his integrity, asking that He would search and try him and see if there was any wicked way in him. But when the fountain was stirred in his "great transgression" a depth and degree of filthiness were discovered that made him cry out in self-loathing and abhorrence, and pray that God would create in him "a clean heart and renew a right spirit within" him. He then desired "truth in the inward parts," "to know wisdom

in the hidden part," to be "purged with hyssop" that he might be clean, and to be "washed" that he might "be whiter than snow." When the prophet Ezekiel digged through the wall of the temple he saw the chambers of imagery,— "every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel; and there sat women weeping for Tammuz; and about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the Lord, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east." So when some sin leads the believer to look into his heart he finds it "a habitation of devils, the hold of every foul spirit and the cage of every mean and hateful bird;" he discovers that he is "carnal, sold under sin," that "within him," that is, within his flesh, "there dwelleth no good thing;" and he cries out in his distress, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!"

2. *Their sin makes them more watchful against temptation.* Self-sufficiency is our besetting sin. We overrate our own strength and underrate the force of the adversary. And when he makes his attack we are surprised and fall before him. But by the grace of God we rise up with renewed strength and drive him back, shouting, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; though I fall, I shall rise again!" And then what diligence in repairing the walls, in putting on and using "the whole armor of God," and in watching against any sudden or unlooked for assault! Peter was self confident. The Saviour's warning, that "Satan desired to have him that he might sift him as wheat," fell upon an inattentive ear. He boasted that "though all should be offended because of Him, yet would not he." In the face of the Saviour's declaration, that "before the cock crow twice thou shalt deny me thrice," he affirmed that he would go with Him to prison and to death. And in the garden, instead of watching and praying against temptation he slept. But after his denial and restoration he is willing enough to recognize the power of the tempter, and to be ever watchful against his "wiles." "Be sober—exercise a sound mind, have all your powers well in hand; "be vigilant"—'be wakeful, be on the alert; look around you; with excited attention actively exert your mind;' "because your adversary the devil, as a *roaring lion*, walketh about seeking whom he may devour; whom resist, steadfast in the faith."

3 *Their sin makes their zeal and hatred against it the more intense.* The ravenous wild beast is permitted to live in a cage, because there restrained from doing harm; but when it breaks out, rather than suffer it to run at large and prey upon the community, it is slain. When sin breaks out of the believer's heart in evil action it is slain at once. "If ye through the Spirit do *mortify the deeds* of the body, ye shall live." The believer "brings these his enemies before him" and slays them outright. These priests of Baal must be cut off—not one suffered to escape. Hezekiah was ever humble after discovering "the pride of

his heart" in showing his treasures to the messengers of the king of Babylon. That sin was never allowed to show its head. And as he went through his kingdom cutting down the groves and breaking in pieces the graven images, so he went through all the chambers of his heart, crushing the head of every viper and slaying every lust. He warmed the serpent of sin to life in his bosom and it struck its fangs into his heart. Now nothing will satisfy him but its destruction. "Crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts."

4. *Their sin is made the means of promoting their sanctification.* As sin discovered the perfections of God, so it brings out the graces of the believer. There could not be such love to God were it not for hatred of sin, nor humility if we had not been cast down by it, nor patience if we had not been brought under the rod for it. Sin makes us more sensibly to realize our dependence upon God's grace. Peter could walk upon the water while he kept his eyes upon Christ. But when he looked at the raging waves and listened to the winds he was afraid and began to sink. Then, looking to Jesus, he cried, "Lord, save me!" And when Jesus "stretched forth His hand and caught Him, and said unto Him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" he realized, as never before, his dependence upon Him. Sometimes God allows the believer to leave Him for a while and be joined unto the world; but bye and bye its pleasures, honors, and wealth all fail to satisfy. Then he returns, saying, like the faithless wife, "I will go and return to my first husband, for then was it better with me than now." Paul's "thorn in the flesh" was a constant reminder of God's promise, "My grace shall be sufficient for thee." The believer's sin makes him prize more highly the blood of Christ, by which he is cleansed. In his conversion the believer realizes that he is saved by "the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot," "the blood of Jesus Christ God's Son," "the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel." But these impressions pass away. And were it not that our besetting sins drive us to our Advocate every day, we would soon cease to appreciate the worth and efficacy of His blood. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins." The believer's sin makes him more zealous for God's glory. It drives him to God and it is a sphere in his service for God. Paul persecuted the church. He never could forget that. And it goaded him on to the greatest activity. "Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel." As far as he had gone back in sin, so much the farther he leaped forward in holiness. As his enmity abounded in his natural state, so his love superabounded in his gracious. Sin is the whetstone with which God sharpens the renewed spirit. Sin is the sand with which he polishes the renewed soul. Sin is the dung about the roots of the plant of grace, making it grow more luxuriantly. Sin is the frost and snow

which pulverize the soil of the renewed heart and prepare it for enjoying and improving the heat of the Sun of Righteousness. Steven Chasnock, in his work on "The Existence and Attributes of God," a work which has no equal in that field, and which is too little read in this day, in the discourse on "The Wisdom of God," where the thought of this article originated, says: "How doth faith, that sunk under the waves, lift up its head again, and carry the soul out with a greater liveliness! What ardors of love, what floods of repenting tears, what severity of revenge, what horrors at the remembrance of the sin, what tremblings at the appearance of a second temptation! so that grace seems to be awakened to a new and more vigorous life (2 Cor. vii., 11)." Thanks be unto God that even our sins are made to work together for our good.

1. This gives comfort to the humbled, penitent believer. Not comfort in sinning. There is no encouragement here to go on in sin. "Shall we sin, then, that grace may abound? God forbid!" But comfort in view of his sins which he wishes had never been committed, which he mourns over and abhors. God makes them blessings.

2. It is a test of our gracious state. If our sins increase our hatred of them, deepen and intensify our love for Christ, strengthen our faith and brighten our hopes, then we are in Christ, with Christ, like Christ, and Christ is in us the hope of glory.

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### *THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN BRITAIN.*

BY THE REV. J. KERR, GLASGOW.

The election storm is over. It lasted unusually long and was furious enough. Even the groundswell is somewhat of a storm. But there is sufficient calmness for jotting up the results, glancing at the track made by the electoral machine, and forecasting the legislative programme. "The unexpected always happens," said Lord Beaconsfield, whose political hopes were so signally disappointed at the last elections. Again, though in different form, has the unexpected happened. All parties are disappointed, except the Nationalists. The Conservatives, led by Lords Salisbury and Churchill, have not been justified in their determination to abide in power without much hesitancy. The Liberals and advanced Liberals, led by Mr. Gladstone, Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain, have not had such a majority as entitles them to oust their rivals, and they are not quite a unified body of themselves. The Nationalists or Parnellites have certainly scored a victory; and are jubilant at the prospect of wrenching from the Imperial Parliament their whole claim for an independent government in Ireland. The numbers of the parties are: Liberals, 333; Conservatives, 251; Nationalists, 86.

The Liberals confidently anticipated their return to power. On various grounds these anticipations were, in a large measure, justified.