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I.

THE FUTURE OF HUMANITY ON EARTH.

HE would be a bold thinker who should undertake to foretell the fortunes and the state of an American Republic five or ten centuries hence:—who should attempt not only to describe the type or types of government which may then exist here, but also to delineate the personal characteristics of the men and women of that distant era, the social life of the period, the grade of development and of civilization which our humanity will then have attained on this broad and elect continent. How much bolder would he be who, in full view of the present medley of antagonistic elements, religious, political, social, in European society and life, should propose to tell us what Europe will have become, after the agitations and the mutations of the next thousand years! Bolder still would he be deemed who should attempt to prognosticate the future at that distant period, not of any single nation or continent, but of all the continents and all the races of mankind: who should assume to say what this world, in its controlling elements and tendencies, its prevailing spirit and principles and life, will be at the end of five or ten more centuries of activity and of growth. But would not he be boldest of all—daring beyond all comparison—who should venture to prophesy concerning the career and development of our humanity, not for any such given period however prolonged, but down to the last century and the last hour of recorded time: unfolding before our vision that ultimate issue in which the whole of human life on earth shall be consummated, in the decisive day

## II.

### THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH IN THE EVANGELIZATION OF THE MASSES.

THE word, "Evangelize," is one of God's silver trumpets, by whose clear, clarion peal, His modern Israel are to be rallied for the onward march, stirred and spurred to action. Evangelization means simply this: bringing the evangel, or gospel, into contact with unsaved souls.

Paul writes to the Church at Corinth, "Christ sent me, not to baptize, but to evangelize" (1 Cor. i. 17). Baptism represents one important department of the offices entrusted to the Church and her ministry, viz: the administration of ordinances and sacraments. This is of great importance, but it is not of the first importance. Baptism, for instance, is a sealing, but not a saving, sacrament. It is not, like "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts xx. 21), one of the primary terms of salvation. It implies a saved state, present or prospective; in the adult believer, it is simply the first signal act in a series of acts, by which he expresses and exhibits his allegiance and obedience to his new Lord; in the case of the infant, it is the sign and seal of parental faith in a covenant relation, which shall issue in a saved state, by the operation of grace; and it recognizes the unity of the family, in a representative act, performed by the believing parent, in expectation and anticipation of the voluntary and intelligent self-dedication of his offspring. To lift even this solemn sacrament to a level with faith, is to do a great wrong both to truth and to souls. Faith justifies the soul, by the appropriation of Christ's merit and mediation; baptism justifies the faith, as one of those holy works by which the existence and genuineness of faith are proven.

It is easy to see why Paul puts, first and foremost, this, viz: "to evangelize," rather than "to baptize." Those who explic-

itly or impliedly attribute to baptism a saving efficacy, or who seem to think that there lies in baptism a regenerative power, must have forgotten that "Jesus himself baptized not" (John iv. 2); that, probably, Paul himself was the only apostle who received strictly Christian baptism, the others of the apostolic college having received only the baptism of John, which, as we learn from the case of the Ephesian disciples (Acts xix 1-5), was only preparatory to the baptism of Christ. Cornelius and his household received not only regenerating grace, but the blessed baptism of the Holy Ghost, even before the baptism with water, as though God meant to teach us not to give even to this sealing sacrament a saving power.

Here, then, is Paul's emphatic declaration: "Christ sent me, first of all, to evangelize." Of all the duties committed to the Christian Church and to her ministry, this is primary; this is first in the order of time; first in the order of importance. It is first in time, for without this there would have been no believers to be baptized; the New Testament Church was formed from new converts to the faith, made such by the preaching of the Gospel. It is first in importance, for without this the Church cannot grow, and it is growth which keeps it in being. To the Household of Faith, as to the family of man, the condition of continuance is obedience to the divine law, "Increase and multiply." Evangelization is the method of propagation, by which God's seed is kept alive upon the earth. The administration of ordinances, organization, co-operation, edification—all these hang upon evangelization; for if there be no converts to the Gospel, whence shall come the raw material, to be wrought into better, more beautiful, and more useful forms?

The Church of God is responsible, therefore, not for conversion, but for contact. She must see that all men hear the Gospel, as surely and speedily as practicable; and so far as she fails to bring God's good tidings into contact with souls, she disobeys Christ's last command, declines in her spiritual life, forfeits her commission, and runs the risk of the removal of her candlestick out of its place. In the last words recorded by Matthew, our Lord solemnly enjoins upon His disciples two things: first, to disciple all nations; and, secondly, to teach them to observe whatsoever He commands (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20). The two Greek verbs, *μαθητεύσατε* and *διδάσκοντες*, should not

both be rendered by the one word, "teach," as in our English version; for they represent the two branches of our great duty and trust: first, to go out and gather in new disciples, and then to teach and train them in the knowledge and practice of all truth and duty; first, to disciple men, then to discipline them.

At risk of seemingly needless and tedious amplification, we repeat this grand truth for the sake of emphasis: The Church must first of all evangelize. She is to bear and to rear offspring for her divine Lord; but before she can rear, she must bear. She must not shrink from the pains of travail, for only through the throes which accompany spiritual birth, does God's household grow. That last promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," is joined to that last precept, not by the accident of collocation, but by a living link; for that presence is enjoyed only as that precept is obeyed! If the Church is faithful in making and teaching disciples, she basks in the smile of her Lord. If her zeal in evangelizing gives place to cold neglect of souls unsaved, then as surely does He withhold or withdraw the glorious tokens of His gracious presence and power.

In various ways, the great Head of the Church has sought to impress on His disciples this double duty of making and training disciples. In Matthew (xiii. 31-33), we have a pair of parables: the "mustard seed," illustrating the law of inward growth, and the "leaven," the law of outward extension. In the interview between the risen Redeemer and His disciples recorded by John (xx. 19-22), we observe first a word of peace, next a word of commission, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you," and then a word of conferment, bestowing power to fulfil the commission: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

I. How the Church shall evangelize is, therefore, a vital question; and it is plain that, first of all, the *Gospel should be made attractive*, by the exhibition of its true and normal charms, as found in the good news, and in the life of real disciples. Let Zion arise and shine, let a pure Gospel be preached and a pure type of piety express its saving truth in the language of life; and from the deep darkness souls will be drawn by the shining; Gentiles will come to her light and kings to the brightness of her rising.



Paul cautions us not to pervert this doctrine of attraction, by confounding spiritual and secular charms: "not with wisdom of words," he says, "lest the cross of Christ be made of none effect." The Gospel must be, first of all, effective, and attractive in order to be effective. We shall make the worst and saddest of mistakes, if, while seeking to render it attractive, we lessen or even destroy its effectiveness, by investing it with false attractions. The possibility of running such a risk may well rivet our closest attention.

What, then, is "wisdom of words"? Some think it means the golden and silver tissues of ornate speech, by which the simplicity of the plain, homely Gospel message is veiled. Others understand by it, a show of wisdom, the empty pretence of learning and genius. Yet others refer it to wisdom of a worldly sort, and take Paul as refusing to connect or corrupt the wisdom of God's teaching, with human speculations, however wise. In the view of others, wisdom of words has to do not with matter, but manner; the presentation of spiritual truth after the style of the schools.

There is, we are persuaded, a deeper thought latent in this phrase. Paul doubtless refers to both matter and manner: human wisdom he would not preach, for, in its highest reach, it knew not God and failed to save men; nor would he preach the wisdom of God, as though that were but another school of philosophy. "Which things also we speak, *not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth*, comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. ii. 13). He conceived the Gospel as having *a dialect of its own*. The secret of true preaching lies, first, in a vital insight, by the Spirit, into the divine truths of the Gospel; and then in the use of a form of words which is begotten of such spiritual insight. Unction begins with imparting a knowledge of divine things, and then bestows its sacred chrism of fragrance and power upon the utterance of truth, and indeed upon the whole man who speaks God's message.

A true apprehension of the mind of God will create its own form of expression, and not import and force upon Gospel truth a form of speech foreign and unsuitable. The height of taste in dress is adaptation. Fashion is often unnatural, artificial; but when fashion, feature, and form are a unit, no attention is

called to apparel—you simply feel pleased with the unity and harmony. Paul would have the fashion of the Gospel suit and fit its divine form and feature, and not clothe God's message with a dress of words drawn from other spheres of life and thought, a garment spotted by the flesh. He would not make this saving Gospel of none effect by robing it in an unsanctified rhetoric; he would speak, not as a converted scholar, logician, or philosopher, but as a herald and witness for Christ.

There is a way of preaching the Gospel which makes it of none effect; lifts it above the level of the average man, veils its sweet simplicity; diverts attention from the Word to the golden mouth of the speaker; which calls forth a cold, intellectual assent, awakens an æsthetic pleasure, touches the sensibilities, but fails to pierce the heart, grapple the conscience, move the will, or mould the life. The naked truth, like the naked sword, is the Spirit's weapon of power. How many there are who swing the sword, as though more intent on showing the flashing diamonds with which culture decks its hilt, than on thrusting its keen blade and sharp point into the very vitals of the soul!

It is perhaps a better metaphor to express the truth which we wish to emphasize, when we say of words that they are the body of thought, rather than its dress; or, as Wordsworth finely and philosophically says: "Language is the incarnation of thought." As God, even to the sprouting grain, giveth a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed His own body, so to the vital principle which is the germinal life in His own seed of truth, He has given its own body, for which human culture can never successfully substitute any other. "There are also bodies celestial, and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another." To attempt to join the body of terrestrial eloquence to the soul of celestial truth, is to make the Gospel of none effect. The divine soul will have, must have, *its own body*, and the glory must be celestial, alone. Then there is harmonious unity; men hear the message of heaven in the dialect of heaven, and unto God only they give glory.

The Gospel, then, demands its own peculiar sacred dialect, in which to be preached. The Spirit chooses His own channels, through which to pour His flood of grace. The power of the

simple Word of God, read or repeated without one word of man to add to it, adorn it, or even expound and apply it, is an evidence of its divine origin. Nettleton began his famous sermon on the text, "I thought on my ways and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies," by the slow, solemn, impressive repetition of those words, once, twice, thrice; and, before he had uttered the first syllable of his sermon, a vast audience had been instantly pierced by the Spirit through the thrust of His own sword. So when Peter, in the house of Cornelius, "began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word."

Robert Hall preached for seven years in Bristol, and rendered great service in the cause of Christian apologetics; his discourses both educated and edified believers, and form even now a rich legacy to Christendom. Yet George Müller says that those magnificent pulpit orations, which were not eclipsed in brilliance by any others of that day, were not fruitful in *conversions*. On the other hand, an unlettered evangelist, who was privately advised by his refined pastor, a score of years ago, to keep quiet, because he lacked the gift of speaking to edification, has been moving two continents by simply holding up the cross!

We need, even in the ministry, a revival of faith in the converting power of the simple word of God, unmixed with human apology or apologetics. We are constantly drawn down by the challenge of critical culture and scientific scepticism upon the plain, in the vain attempt to cope with human learning, or fight these Syrian sceptics and scientists with their peculiar weapons; whereas, if we but kept on the hills, and most of all the hill of Calvary, and only lifted up the cross so high that all might be drawn to Him who bare our sins, we might convince those whom no argument could touch, and convert those whom no eloquence could reach. A great Scotch divine has remarked that it is always some *word of God* in our sermons, and not any words of ours, that brings souls to Christ; and that the use of our words seems to be found in this, that they are "the feathers which carry the divine arrow straight to the mark." If we would have the Gospel effective to convert men, let it be the pure truth of God, according to the thought of a spiritual mind, according to the speech of an

anointed tongue: the wisdom of God without unsanctified wisdom of words; Gospel truth in a Gospel dialect!

This thought of Paul is but a starting-point, not a goal: a golden milestone, from which many roads radiate, leading us into wide territories of thought, stretching across a whole continent of practical truth. One suggestion which lies very near to the very starting-point thus afforded us, is this, that in making the Gospel attractive we must beware not only of the wisdom of words, but of the *wisdom of the world*.

This peril is always a present one: that the Church, leavened by the world, shall adopt worldly maxims, cater to worldly minds, and robe the Gospel in worldly charms, seeking, by making it thus attractive, to make it effective. There have been times when, in deference to the dictation of a worldly spirit, the pulpit has been lowered into a platform for lectures more fit for the lyceum, or even into a stage for dramatic acting more fit for the theatre. The service of sacred song has at times been turned into a display of artistic talent, in which the appeal to æsthetic tastes has taken the place of the divine savor and flavor of worship. In His house, where the Lord alone is to be exalted, "classical music" is sometimes exalted; papists and pagans are hired to lead the praise of Protestant worshippers, and a profane organist uses the keys of the grandest of instruments to dissipate the impressions of the Gospel. We may build Gothic fanes, furnish them with crimson and gold, garnish them with the pencil and chisel of art, secure for the choir an operatic quartette, and for the pulpit a splendid orator; then multiply concerts, lectures, fairs, and festivals, entertainments and excursions; but all these allurements will not draw the people to the house of God, except it may be for a time. The reason is plain. The attractions of Zion are peculiar to herself: they are not of the world even as her Lord is not of the world; they belong to another order of beauty, the Beauty of Holiness. The Church of God, robed in the charms of the world, instead of drawing the world to herself and to Christ, actually takes the infection of the worldly spirit; and it was for this reason that the Master has warned her to keep herself "unspotted from the world," "hating even the garment, spotted by the flesh."

If souls are to be drawn to God's house with cords not easily



broken, it must be by the proper charms of a pure Gospel, simple, spiritual, satisfying to the soul; by praise, full of devotion, and prayer, full of devoutness; by that "atmosphere" peculiar to the assembly of true worshippers and the presence of the Holy Spirit. Secular attractions, even while their power lasts, make the cross of Christ of none effect: they turn the mind from the things of God; even while they draw, it is in the same direction as the world draws, bringing men under the power of the world that now is, and not under the powers of the world to come!

If the Church would attract worldly souls, she must woo and win them by offering them what the world does not, and cannot—solid, substantial, satisfying food and drink. She must feed them, not on ashes, but on the bread of life; give them draughts of living water from a divine fountain, instead of stagnant water from a broken cistern. Feed the hunger and quench the thirst of souls, and souls will come! Mr. Spurgeon's Tabernacle is always full; yet there is about the man, the house, the service, no worldly charm. The hymns, "lined-out" after the old style, are sung without a show of art, and the rear part of the congregation chases the fore-part, in a vain attempt to keep pace in time; an exposition, long enough for a sermon, is followed by an hour of preaching: and yet men never tire of going, for they find there salvation and sanctification. God's Spirit honors the simplicity of a service of worship that aims only at His glory, and so, after a quarter of a century, the charm, once attributed by many to novelty and curiosity, has not lost its power. The Tabernacle would doubtless be full, if instead of five thousand it could hold twenty thousand.

One cannot but feel the marked contrast of a cathedral service, with all its attractions. A colossal organ, whispering plaintive melodies, or rolling billows and pealing thunders of sound along the lofty arches; a choir of surpliced lads, warbling like larks; a grand sermon from a great preacher: yet all these wiles fail to lure the people. You find only a few nominal worshippers there, and they move about or stare around as if in a mere museum. There is an abundant array of facts from which the Church of God may learn, if she will, the important lesson, that, in her methods of administration, she is to be "separate unto God;" that, if she will invite the spirit of the

world to her courts, she cannot have the Spirit of God ; unless indeed He comes, not as the shining Shekinah, but as the consuming fire—not as Jesus with the breathing of the Holy Ghost, but as Jesus, with the lashing scourge and the flashing eye !

II. In order to *evangelize*, we must, however, do more than open our church-doors and say, "Come." The Church cannot fulfil her commission by doing all that is possible to make the preaching of the Gospel *both attractive and effective*, even though the attractions savor of the beauty of holiness: to make the sanctuary free to all, and add a cordial welcome, is not enough. Our Lord says, "Go!" "Go out into the streets, lanes, highways, by-ways;" "Go ye into all the world!" and "*bring in*—compel to come—the poor, maimed, halt, blind, that my house may be filled!" No words can have a plainer meaning. To evangelize, disciples must *go after* the lost, and not *wait for the lost to come* to them: and, more than this, they must go and bear the Gospel to those most remote and most needy, the most distant and the most destitute.

Upon this plain platform of practical doctrine and duty, it is time that we firmly planted our feet. The whole witness of Scripture warrants us in framing this as an article of our faith, viz: any Church that loves Christ and souls enough, to *go out* and by love's sweet compulsion, *bring souls in*; drawing no invidious lines between poor and rich, high and low; but seeking the lost, and seeking most earnestly those who are most desperately lost; that is the Church where God will show His presence and power by a perpetual Pentecost!

The matter we are discussing is vital. It is no insignificant issue with which we are dealing; for the usefulness of the Church may be involved. It is a plain fact, that for some cause, the great mass of the people are not habitually found in our places of assembly; immense numbers do not attend even occasionally. We fail to draw them; they do not "come," and we do not "go." Why they do not come, is a grave question, demanding an extended answer; but there is one part of that answer that falls within the scope of this discussion, viz: we who are entrusted with the Gospel commission are not fulfilling it with sufficient earnestness. Let us enter somewhat into particulars.

These unevangelized multitudes are not commonly *expected* in our assemblies: they are not always provided for. Sometimes we do not build with reference to gathering them in, and could not give them room if they should come. The writer of this paper is a pastor in the City of the Straits; and he observes that, in that city, for instance, the church-sittings fall from thirty thousand to fifty thousand short of the demand, if a mere numerical estimate be made the basis of the calculation. Of course there is no practical inequality between the supply and the demand, inasmuch as these thousands do not go to our churches; but can we heartily invite them to come if we have not room for them?

No doubt the poor are kept from our assemblies by the pride of poverty more than they are repelled by the pride of wealth. Yet possibly there are some fashionable synagogues which fill out Mr. Cook's quaint profile: whose "aristocratic members must be fanned with eloquent sermons, sprinkled with the lavender of ease, and swung in a hammock, one end of which is fastened to the cross while the other is held by the fingers of mammon." There is a superb little gem of a church-edifice, built by a few select families, luxuriously fitted and furnished, which the common folk style "the Pullman palace-car church." Whether right or wrong, they think that the poor, maimed, halt, and blind are not bidden to the Gospel feast as there spread, and not expected to ride to heaven in that car. Will there not be a new reformation in the Churches if we earnestly desire the non-church-goers to be brought in?

The mission of the Church in evangelization has been greatly hindered by the unbelief of God's people as to the practical power of the Gospel. How often do we hear it said, that "the Gospel has *lost its hold* upon the masses!" Has it ever, in these days, *had hold* of them? Has the modern Church, as a whole, set herself vigorously to *try* to lay hold of the people at large? It is not true that her hold is relaxed, if she has not yet taken hold. A few distributors of Bibles and tracts have been, here and there, sent out to scatter religious literature among the ignorant and degraded, many of whom cannot even read. There have been occasional visits by missionaries and Bible-readers, along the alleys of our great cities, whose round of calls it requires a six-month to complete. Services have



been held in places, often so unfit that to go is almost to forfeit one's own respectability. Churches and chapels have been built for the poor, and invidiously attached to our better class of churches, under the name of "Missions." We build elegant structures that rival cathedrals in size and splendor, for ourselves, and then erect cheap chapels for the poor. What if there be a voice in the very contrast, which seems to say to the lower classes of society, "We hold you at arm's length!" That Christian philanthropy has need to remodel its methods which organizes Sabbath-schools for the children of poverty and calls them "Ragged schools," as though to taunt poverty with its rags.

To the heathen abroad, we send our best men and women, trained scholars and linguists, skilful physicians, educated teachers and preachers; we use on pagan soil our costliest apparatus and means of grace; and taking all things into account, our success in evangelizing is three-fold as great as at home. To the heathen about us, we offer a dainty gloved hand or a finger-tip, as though we feared that contact might contaminate; we do not identify ourselves with the want and woe that is beneath the very shadow of our church spires, and then we wonder at the indifference of the masses to the Gospel, and ask why it has lost its hold!

The *extent* of the neglect of the house of God, in our great cities, is startling. At an anniversary of the "Open-Air Mission" at Islington, the Earl of Shaftesbury stated, that "not more than two per cent. of workingmen are wont to attend public worship." We have no accurate statistics upon which to base an estimate, but it is believed that at least *forty per cent.* of our city population attend no place of worship, Papal or Protestant. Is there anything in these "workingmen" that makes it impossible or impracticable to evangelize them?

To the doubting John the Baptist, our Lord gave this as the crowning mark of His Messiahship: "To the poor the Gospel is preached," that is, the most destitute and desperate classes were most surely reached with the good tidings. Yes, "the common people heard Him gladly." St. Luke gives upward of twenty instances in which the hate of scribes, pharisees, and rulers plotted Christ's ruin; and as many instances



in which the common people stuck to His cause, foiled the malice of His foes, and held them in check.

Our Lord both preached to the people, and reached them : they formed the bulk of all His hearers and followers. Human nature has undergone and can undergo no radical change. If our Saviour's brief sojourn on earth had fallen in these days instead of those, the multitudes who do not come to our churches, and the problem of whose evangelization the Church seems unable to solve, would be found now, as then, thronging about Him. But He would not enthrone and enshrine Himself in some grand metropolitan temple, and seek to draw the people by attractions that savor not of the salt of godliness. He would go wherever He could find the common folk, to street corners and river-banks, to private houses and public marts. He would make Himself one among them, one of them, eating with publicans and sinners, not afraid to touch even the loathsome leper, lifting up the fallen, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and those in jails ; saying to the outcast and abandoned : "Neither do I condemn thee ; go and sin no more !" Our profound conviction is, that if we, Christ's disciples, will not shut ourselves up in our gilded fanes, will not enshrine mammon, where we claim to enthrone God ; if we will go and make ourselves saviours to the lost, one with, one of, the least and lowest ; take hold of poverty and misery, want and woe, with an ungloved hand, through whose firm grasp may be felt the beat of a warm heart, we shall reach the "common people," as our Master did. We are called to "take up the cross and follow Christ," not only as individuals, but as a body of believers ; we must shape our corporate action upon the principle of self-denial and self-sacrifice for Christ's sake, and then we shall be of service in saving souls. And, until in these things, we have followed Him, and have still failed to reach the common heart of humanity, it is not candid for us to talk and act as though the "evangelization of the masses" were a problem too hard to solve !

The teachings of Holy Scripture do not form the only guide in matters of duty. To a thoughtful, careful eye, God's Providence becomes, often, in the very night of our darkness, a luminous and moving pillar of cloud and of fire. In these latter days, God seems to be thus providentially advancing before

His Israel. Is there no meaning in the repeated and remarkable success reached in "Gospel tents," public halls, theatres, and opera houses? The attention of the writer was providentially turned to the study of the subject upon which this paper treats, by the very unusual effectiveness of preaching services, held in the Whitney Grand Opera House of Detroit, in gathering under the sound of the Gospel, the neglectors of God's house. The Fort Street Presbyterian Church, of which he is pastor, lost its beautiful edifice by fire, in March, 1876. During some fifteen months succeeding, while the new building was in process of erection, a harvest was reaped, entirely without a parallel in the previous history of that church, no fifteen years of which had done as much to evangelize the masses, as those fifteen months in a place where all were free to come, and where all classes were, for the time, upon a sovereign level of equality. Are we more quick to read the face of the sky than to discern the signs of the times? Is not God, in the language of events, which are vocal with solemn significance, saying to us all, that if we wish to reach the people, we must be willing to hold services where the people go, as well as to ask them to come where we hold services?

But, we are quite too conservative to turn our backs upon the church-edifices, consecrated to the service of God and surrounded by a hallowed atmosphere of associations. Nor is there need of forsaking our sacred places of assembly. Our work has more than one aspect. First, there is need of the stated preaching of God's Word, in God's own proper house, fragrant with an atmosphere of holy memories, for the sake of its influence on habitual hearers. The church is a family home for Christian households, and for many who, without professing piety, feel bound up in the same bundle with God's people. Secondly, there is need of all that group of spiritual methods for the education and edification of believers, which we so well call, "means of grace." For such objects, the church-building, set apart for sacred uses, is the fit place, perhaps the only really fit place.

But, thirdly, we need as a right arm, for the sole or supreme end of evangelization, the preaching of the Word in such outside places as the common people, the neglectors of God's worship, frequent or will attend. It is true they ought to come

to our churches; they ought to prize sanctuary privileges so highly, as to be willing to give whatever they are able, for the support of the Gospel. But, the fact is, that they *do not come*, and do not, perhaps, feel willing to pay even a very moderate and reasonable pew-rent. What, then, are we to do? Shall we leave them to neglect Christ and perish? And, because they are wrong in their feelings and course, abandon them to their lost state? It must not be! We are "to seek and to save that which is lost!" Go where the lost may be found, woo them, win them. Give them the Gospel, when and where they are most likely to hear and heed it! If we cannot "bait" the fish and draw them to our stationary net, let us seek out their favorite resorts, where they throng, and use the casting-net to surround and enclose them. If once in any way the Gospel-net has caught them, we shall be able to draw them to the shore. Let those who will not come to the assemblies of saints to hear the good news, once taste its sweetness, and they will both come to God's house and give to the support of the Gospel.

There are not a few in the Church, both among her ministry and her membership, who yearn to make a fair and a faithful trial of a more simple, scriptural model of church organization and administration, uncontrolled by worldly minds or worldly maxims, with a severe simplicity of work and worship, with no attempt at worldly attractions, in choir or pulpit; where everything shall exalt God, fulfilling the literal intent of worship, viz: ascribing *worth* to God; where there shall be no salaried preacher, hired choir, or rented pew, and where the preaching of the Gospel and benevolent work shall be supported by the voluntary gifts cheerfully offered by consecrated hearts, rather than wrung by impassioned appeal from the unwilling and worldly-minded, and even the unconverted. Not because these things are in themselves wrong and sinful; neither, perhaps, is "wisdom of words": but because these resorts mean a lack of faith in God, in the pure unmixed Gospel, in the power of prayer, and in the promised presence of the Holy Ghost; because they mean that the policy and the spirit of the world infect and infest the life of the Church. We try all these things, in hope to draw and hold the people; and, with them all, we fail, because these are not God's methods! The spirit



of the world, which, as we too often forget, is the spirit of Satan, invading and pervading the Church, *secularizes* the Church, *i. e.*, takes away its separate character: and so God's Holy Spirit is grieved and quenched, for He will not dwell among us unless the divine law of separation is observed (see 2 Cor. vi. 14-18). We may preserve our orthodoxy and our morality, and yet, that peculiar "Holiness to the Lord," that unique "power of the Holy Ghost," by which the Church of God is to be distinguished, as by a mark upon her very forehead, and by which she is to witness for Christ and win victories over the powers of darkness, may be withdrawn!

As a hint has been dropped in the course of this paper, that possibly the "*free*" principle in Church administration might be found helpful and wholesome in reaching higher results in evangelization, it may be well to add, that it has been tried successfully as the financial basis of Church life. We quote: "The Free Church Association of Philadelphia have prepared a paper in which it is stated that only four churches in that city pay expenses by pew rents. The pew rents of all the churches pay only three-fourths of the expenses, and average \$6.16 per sitting. The free churches, it says, contribute \$9.60 per sitting. In the country churches the balance is the same way. The average cost of sitting is \$3.58, and the rentals do not support the churches; while the free churches, leaving out the "mission" churches, pay \$6.50 per sitting."

This great question of a necessity for some new method of reaching the practically heathen souls immediately about us, is absorbing the best thought of the best minds in the Church. It may lead to some expedients which will prove effective only for a time, but we feel confident that an angel from heaven is troubling the pool, and that some lasting cure of our churchly impotence will result from the moving of the waters. Our Episcopalian brethren who have led the van in the worldly charms of their church edifices and services, their music and ritual, are to-day, perhaps, leading the van in this country, in the work of evangelizing the people. Some of them have the grace to see that souls are not won by those worldly charms which are vainly used to compensate for a lack of spiritual life and power; and with a heroic and holy courage, to abandon them for methods which partake more of primitive, apostolic simplicity.



A gifted rector in New York city, who had well-nigh been dropped out of the "apostolic succession," because he would preach wherever he got a chance, has sought to set in play a many-sided benevolence and to make his church a sacred Briareus, with an hundred hands stretched out to help; pitching a "Gospel tent" right amid the people, and feeding the body that the soul may afterward be fed. On Sunday afternoons the "Andrew and Philip Society" serves hot meat and oysters, tea, coffee, and bread, to hundreds of hungry men, as, on Tuesday afternoons, the "Mary and Martha Society" serves hungry women. How natural that those who throng the supper-tables should stay to hear of One who taught us to feed the hungry, and preach the Gospel to the poor; and that the drunken and degraded should be led to Him, and no longer be recognized by their old companions, because of their changed look and life! If we have the will and the self-sacrifice, the outcast may be reached, and some, whom no man could bind or tame, may be found sitting at Jesus' feet, clothed in His righteousness and in their right mind!

A greater zeal in evangelizing may prove a means of supplying the lacking element in our Church life. Statistics show that the net increase of our Church membership in the Presbyterian Church, for example, is rapidly decreasing. It has gone from 29,000 in 1876 down to 7,000 in 1879! God's Spirit is not among us largely in converting power. In some parts, prayer languishes, our best methods are like a vast machine without an adequate motor, and our benevolent schemes drag, from sheer lack of vital vigor in our spiritual life. Dr. Duff said, "The Church that ceases to be evangelistic will soon cease to be evangelical;" and all Church history proves it.

The only hope of a growing, or even continuing, spiritual life is found in unceasing work for souls. Mr. Spurgeon's church goes out constantly to gather in. From the pastor's college, students scatter by the score every Lord's day in every direction throughout London and its suburbs, to teach and preach, wherever there is an open door; and this evangelizing effort both reaches the unsaved and reacts upon the life of the mother Church. The very effort to drive the blood by a pulsation of power to the extremities, keeps the heart beating warmly and vigorously at the centre. It is a curious feature

of God's economy of Christian life, that the most unselfish and self-sacrificing effort to save souls, shall do more to expand and enrich the soul of the worker, than the most concentrated and unceasing endeavor directed simply toward self-culture!

III. In closing this paper, we return toward our starting-point, for that is also our goal; and affirm that our great dependence in all evangelistic work must be upon the *simple, sincere proclamation of the Gospel*. Both the attractiveness and the effectiveness of all methods to bring souls to God will depend largely upon the *simplicity of the message* and the *sincerity of the messenger*.

1. One grand secret of Gospel power lies in the prominence given to "*Christ crucified*." This is the heart of the Gospel, and it is this alone which fits, feeds, fills the human heart: this is the power of God and the wisdom of God. The great peril is that this shall not be preached with enough plainness, faithfulness, and constancy. "*I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.*" We must draw men by lifting up Christ on the cross. The one truth to be declared, magnified, exalted, is this: "*He bore our sins in His own body on the tree.*" Nowhere else are true repentance, faith, and love awakened as at Calvary. Woe be to us if as heralds of salvation we lose sight of the cross, or let others lose sight of it. No philosophy or poetry; no learning or culture; no honesty of purpose or nobility of character, can atone for the intrusion and obtrusion of any other object between the soul and God. Nay, if by undue devotion to scholarship and rhetoric, we call attention rather to our manner than our matter, we may, even while preaching the spiritual Gospel, obscure it by allowing self to come between men and Christ; there is a way of holding up the cross so that we are still before it and not behind it; a way of preaching the Gospel which diverts human eyes from the crucified One.

2. This thought leads naturally to a consideration of the conditions which in the *Messenger* himself contributed to success. By a worldly spirit in the herald, as well as in the hearer, the Gospel is shorn of practical power. It may be, after all, that our sorest need lies just here: more than any change in the methods or the message, we, the messengers, need a new spirit to fill and thrill us, a new inspiration to put life into old,

dead forms, to give new force to old truths. Like Peter, we need a sort of re-conversion—a reformation, transformation, transfiguration into Christ's likeness. A little more faith in the blood-red guilt of sin, and the real ruin of sinners, and in the power of this Gospel in its naked simplicity to meet all the wants and woes of the soul, would lead us to sow the pure seed of God, unmixed with the tares of our own self-confident efforts at poetic, literary, and moral essays. A little more of the burning, glowing, consuming zeal for Christ and souls that sends us to weep between the porch and the altar, beseeching God not to give over His heritage to the reproach of barrenness, might make the seed more fruitful by first steeping it in our own tears. A little more confidence in the promises of God, prompting us to speak and pray and work in the firm faith that, "as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither *until* it has watered the earth and maketh it bring forth and bud," so God's "Word shall not return to Him void," or until it has wrought its blessed results—O, how this would cast out that unbelief because of which He does not and cannot do many mighty works in us and by us!

With one man, whose faith, humility, and consecration make possible a large use of him by God, what wonders are often wrought, even through methods the most unpromising! Visitors at the late Paris Exposition, who saw so many copies of portions of the Word given away at the palace of the Trochadero, little knew how much of this hunger for the blessed Gospel in that priest-ridden metropolis was owing to one obscure Scotchman. In Belleville, that suburb of Paris, out from whose narrow lanes, walled in by lofty tenement-houses, issued forth the fierce and fiery Commune, the rough hand of a French laborer was laid, not long ago, on Mr. McAll's arm, as a voice pleadingly said: "Why do you not come back to us, and tell us more of the true religion?" He returned home, but, above the rattle of cars and the roar of the channel, that voice sounded in his ear. Friends said "No," but God said "Yes;" and Mr. McAll went back, hired a room in that very gateway of hell, whence demons of arson and murder had gone forth in days of anarchy; and began to tell the old, old story. He spoke barbarous French, but a few poor outcasts



heard through his blundering, stammering speech, the voice of a crucified Christ, and, through eyes dim with tears, got a glimpse of the cross. The numbers grew—a larger room must be hired—the largest room overflowed, and other “stations” must be opened, and other helpers secured to feed these hungry souls that had been starving on the husks of papal superstition: and now, at twenty-three places in Paris, and at least six elsewhere, a full and free Gospel is preached and taught by that one Scotchman and his fellow-workers—all this with the hearty sanction of the Government, which openly favors Mr. McAll’s work, as the best “police measure” for promoting order and morality. Nothing impressed these poor Communists more than the fact that in all this work, and for all, Mr. McAll asked them not for a centime: it has been throughout an unselfish labor of love; and even Belleville is turned into a law-abiding district; the home of the lawless Commune is evangelized! And yet we talk as though those who, under the very shadow of our churches, live as heathen cannot be reached; or, as though that old centre of light and love and life on Calvary were like some burnt-out sun!

The Church is put in this world to evangelize; by God’s help the Church can fulfil her mission. But success is to be assured only at some cost. A spirit of self-sacrifice, a deep, divine love for souls; a firm faith in the Word as the sword, in the hand of the Spirit as the power of God, will beget concentration of aim and action before which no obstacle could stand. In the assault on Fort Pulaski, every ball fired in the first volley of seventy guns, struck within a circle of twelve feet. There was no use in resisting guns that could hit like that; and so down came the flag! Many a flag of Satan would be lowered in token of surrender, if he saw the hosts of God in desperate earnest pointing all their guns in one direction! When we hurl the hot and heavy shot of a pure Gospel, a pure life, a true faith in prayer and a love like Christ’s at the defences of sin, the very kingdom of darkness will shake! “Is there anything too hard for God?” Our failures must lead us or drive us to lay hold on His strength. We must preach a pure Gospel in simple faith, and by prayer command the power of the Holy Ghost. Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; even in imperial Rome it was the power of



God unto salvation, and all the culture of Corinth could not tempt him to corrupt the simplicity of "Christ crucified." Today, as then, here is still found both the power of God and the wisdom of God. What has saved us can save others; but there must be *contact*, and every believer must look upon himself as one of the living links by which contact between the soul of man and the salvation of God is to be secured.

The Word of God makes no timid apologies for sin, but paints it in scarlet dyes: it speaks in no doubtful terms of man's ruin, but paints it black as starless midnight! The Word of God tells us of man's universal need of Christ; the highest are not above the necessity of salvation, and the lowest not beneath the possibility of salvation. Standing in the burning focus of divine love on Calvary, we shall feel, kindling within us, a love for man as man that makes the vilest soul seem more precious than all the suns and stars; that makes the humblest sphere of service a radiant orbit of duty and delight, in which we work with God, and "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ," in bringing souls to Him.

God grant us a new Pentecost, when the kingdom of heaven will suffer violence and be taken by force in the eagerness of earnest souls to press into it. A transformed Church will become to souls a perpetuation—almost an incarnation—of the living Christ, whose healing word and touch bring sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, cleansing to the leprous, and life to the dead: every place of prayer will become a Siloam of blessing, a Bethesda of healing; and the shining Shekinah shall once more flood with the uncreated glory the courts of the Lord!

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