

## OLD AND NEW EVANGELISM.

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THE Book of Job is a religious symposium. Devout men are confronted by a condition. One of the best men in the community is suffering grievously. Job feared God and served men, yet he is robbed of his family, stripped of his property, scourged with sickness. His friends diagnose the case and pronounce it to be spiritual blood-poisoning, he has sinned. Sin is the cause, suffering the effect. He declares his righteousness, face to face with men he is satisfied, face to face with God he bows in penitence, abhors himself, repents in dust and ashes.

The Church of Christ is the modern Job, she is losing her children, her place in civilization, her power. Silver and gold she has, but not power to cure cripples by the gate, she can provide canes, crutches, invalid chairs, but not healing. We can minister to the needy but cannot lead them singing and dancing within the temple. We can change conditions but not character.

John Brady, Governor of Alaska, went to that country as a Presbyterian missionary to the natives; after months of hard work he wrote to the missionary society: "We have plenty of Bibles. What we now need is a sawmill." Sawmill evangelism is the new cry; with a sawmill we can conquer the forest, make model tenements, reconstruct civilization. The sawmill has its place, but is it the duty of the Church to set up sawmills? The Kingdom of Heaven has been at hand for centuries, is the cry for repentance to stop with a change of mind for the world, or must it go on to a change of method for the Church?

The answer to these questions are as many as Job's

friends gave. Lorimer the prophet, Watson the preacher, Drummond the scientist, and Rauschenbusch the historian have each spoken.

Lorimer the prophet names the perils that threaten, and pleads for modernizing Christianity.

The perils are: the Saloon; the Stage; the Slum; Appetite; Amusement; Poverty. We must fight the first, regulate the second; alleviate the third. When the saloon is conquered we can easily amuse a sober people; poverty is the handmaid of drunkenness.

In modernizing Christianity, the Church should modernize her speech, her thought, her activities, but should preserve her distinctive character, and not conceal her essential message, nor becloud her supreme object. Her object is the salvation of men, her message the Gospel of grace, her character Christ's messenger. The message cannot be changed, the method must be changed. Paul became all things to all men, if by all means he might win some; he had ability and adaptability.

Watson the preacher, emphasizes the need of a social Christianity. Men are changing from individualism to collectivism. The principle of every man for himself is dying out from national politics, from the life of society, and is bound to die out from religion. The appeal was once to save your own soul, now it must be save the soul and body of the other man. Men have lost their interest in the hell beyond the grave, the city hell is closer and more real. The way to keep out of hell yonder is to help men out of hell here and now. This is all true, but not especially new. Dives stumbled into hell in the future-tense over the body of Lazarus in a present-tense hell. Dr. Watson points to the Old Testament prophets as models. They plead for social righteousness, but they assume that the men to whom they speak are children of God, men and women in the kingdom. Our evangelistic work has to do with folks who are

not saved, who do not claim to be children of God. The Hebrew prophets were building with cut stones, we are trying to quarry as well as build, and our revivals are busy with the unquarried mass. John and Jesus both met men who claimed to be in the kingdom, yet they both insisted upon a new personal life as a condition of a new social life.

Drummond, the scientist, admits. "I do not know what the new Evangelism is, and it is because I do not know that I write this paper. I write because I ought to know, and am trying to know." He is seeking to find some truth that will stir men's minds. "The Gospel for the Age." We do not need a new evangel, but a new Evangelism. The substance is unchanging, but the form must change. We must change our conception of God; of Christ; of Salvation. The new Evangelism must not be doctrinal. The leading faculty of the new theology is not to be the reason. It is to be the imagination. Words must be windows, not prisons. The Word made flesh came in the *express image* of the Father. We must not attempt to prove truth, but make men see truth. In this plea he follows Bushnell. Tyndall pleaded for the use of the imagination in Science, we must appeal to it in Religion. Henry D. Sedgewick contrasts the men and women Reynolds, Gilbert Stuart and others painted, with the portraits painted by Sargent and others. He notes in the modern painters, "ability to react quickly and effectively to stimuli of the immediate present," the chief lack is imagination. Surely the men who laid the corner stone of the Republic had imagination, "They were architects of faith," and architects imagine, but stone masons and bricklayers follow lines drawn for them. Great generals imagine, soldiers obey. The faith-faculty is largely the power to image. This new Evangelism is a scientific attempt to find and stir men; the truth that will stir, the method that will stir will meet the need.

When men are stirred they will act. When men image hell, they will try to escape it, heaven they will try to reach it; suffering, they will try to prevent it.

“Heaven lies about us in our infancy:  
 Shades of the prison-house begin to close  
 Upon the growing boy;  
 But he beholds the light, and whence it flows;—  
 He sees it in his joy.  
 The youth who daily farther from the east  
 Must travel, still is nature’s priest,  
 And by the vision splendid  
 Is on his way attended:  
 At length the man perceives it die away,  
 And fade into the light of common day.”

In our infancy heaven lies all about us, and is shared by those nearest and dearest, nothing keeps one young like sharing childhood with growing children. Heaven is very nigh us when we are “born again,” and very near the Church that has frequent births. Imagination is fresh with those who are young and with those who company with the young. The old Evangelism kept the Church nursery full, and imagination young; the surest way to meet the scientist’s demand is by multiplying converts to Christ.

“New occasions teach new duties,” or rather the old duties over again. The conquest of the Philippines has made this generation as imaginative as the fathers who wrote and adopted the Constitution years ago. The new nursery opened in the tropics has compelled a new study of fundamental principles.

Rauschenbusch the historian finds the present interest in the “New Evangelism” an “expression of dissatisfaction with the old evangelism, the waning power of which is generally conceded.” Our conception of the future is vague, we know not what we want, only *that* we want; the moisture is in the air, it may be rain, snow or hail. “The Gospel of Christ is one and immutable; the

comprehension and expression of it in history has been of infinite variety." "There are two kinds of evangelization. The one proclaims new truth, as Jesus did to his nation, or Paul to the Gentiles, or as a missionary does to the heathen. The other summons men to live and act according to the truth which the Church has previously instilled into their minds and which they have long accepted as true. The latter is, on the whole, the kind which we have to do." "The moral teaching of the Church in the past dealt with private and family life. It has nothing to say about the justice of holding land idle in crowded cities, of appropriating the unearned increment in land values, of paying wages fixed by the hunger of the laborers, and taking the surplus of their output as "profits."

The general complaint is that the Church has no message for the social order, the civic life, the Nation, international relations. It provides row boats for individuals, and even families, but has no ship large enough for a community, no ark large enough for a civilization. Individuals in the Church are intelligent and active, but the Church both as an organized body and as a corporate spiritual force, is inert.

The New Evangelism then is to be organized, corporate, and is to grapple with the living problems of trade and politics.

Our four friends agree that we do not need new truth but new methods. We must modernize our methods. We must awaken the imagination and get new conceptions of old truth. We must apply the truth to the conditions as well as to character. We must apply the truth through organization to organized business and politics. We live in an age of organization, of mechanism, of committees. Politics is run by a machine. Labor has surrendered to unionism, charity is carried on by boards and paid agents. Our fathers used to walk up

stairs, we ride; our food is predigested, our eggs incubated, our political conventions are canned in committees. "The individual withers, and the world is more and more." Personal work is unfashionable, responsibility is shifted to corporations, personality is merged in organization. We lose the tree in the forest, the man in the mass. We are always puzzling about what *we* shall do with the masses, forgetting that the great question is, What shall I do with my neighbor?

The good Samaritan wasn't so bound up in a system that he couldn't stop for personal work. The priest and the Levite had discharged their corporate duties and passed by conscience-free, their training had fitted them to handle offerings by the altar, not men by the wayside; they were parts of an organized order. The Samaritan was an independent, he simply acted out the natural instincts of his heart, dismounted, stooped, lifted, walked, watched, ministered, pledged, went his way. If he had lived in our day he would have called an ambulance, kept on his way, paid his tax, and blamed the government for not keeping the highway safe.

We practise what Dr. Mitchell calls "The Staff Method." When the woman's child died the prophet sent his slave with the staff, bidding him lay it on the child's face, "but there was neither voice nor attention." The mother knew there could nothing come of the staff, she refused to leave Elisha, led him to the dead child, he prayed, lifted the staff, stretched himself upon the dead boy, gave his life, and life came. That is the new Evangelism we need; personal contact, giving of life. We wear gloves, Christ mixed clay with spittle and plastered the eyes of the blind; we give checks, Christ gave himself. The man is the method, no other method will ever take its place. Nathan facing David, Elijah facing Ahab, John facing Herod, Paul facing Felix, when men do wrong tell them face to face, not through laws, or committees, when men

are suffering bend above them and lift them up. "Ye are the light of the world," Shine! "Ye are the salt of the earth." Dissolve! Ye are the living seed. Transform the dead earth by your life, organize it by personal contact into the likeness of God's thought. Do not watch your pastor, while like another David, he faces the champion of the Philistines, he has no more at stake than you have. Christ's method was personal, the method of the early Church was personal. We have lost the citizen in the party, the laborer in the union, if we shall lose the Christian in the Church the loss is complete. Seek and save that which is lost to personal responsibility, in politics and labor, save to personal responsibility individual initiative.

The day of Pentecost has settled over the Church like a cloud and shut out individual thought and work from our life. We see one man standing up, hear one man preaching, see thousands believing and straightway reason that is the way to work, get some Peter to do it all. A few days after "they went everywhere preaching the word." Jew and Gentile were won by the multitude of workers.

The apple tree starts in a seed, the final consummation is an apple with seeds in the heart of it. The old Evangelism was personal, the new Evangelism must be personal. The saving of a man, by the Son of Man, through a man. The way into the kingdom is by the new birth, the work in the kingdom must be done by individuals. The one revival we need more than any and all others is the revival of personal work. Collectivism has syndicated capital and organized conscienceless trusts, collectivism has organized labor into conscienceless unions, let not the blight and curse come upon the Church. The Roman Catholic Church teaches us the meaning of a closely organized Church dominating the State; of re-

ligion controlled by a priesthood, of a people moved like pawns in the game.

“Back to Jesus” means back to personal work, back to individual responsibility. “I have finished the work Thou gavest *me* to do.” Back to Paul means, “I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith. I have finished *my* course.”

Personal work would settle many vexed questions. The mistress who evangelizes her maid, shares with her the kingdom of Christ by personal work is bound to treat her well in the home. No woman can lead another to Christ and abuse her afterward. They may sit in the same church, listen to the same preacher, partake of the same communion, and be as widely apart as were Dives and Lazarus in the parable, but once the mistress has led the maid to Christ personally, introduced her to the Master of both, the one must be kind and patient, the other honest and faithful.

The employer of labor who has led his men to the great friend of both cannot take advantage of power to hurt, and the man who has been led will not scamp his work, nor think more of his wage than of his work. The landlord who has plead with his tenant to accept Christ will not raise his rent without first talking with his brother and getting his point of view.

If Nathan would reform David he must let ewe lambs alone. If Elijah would rebuke Ahab he must keep off the private property of Naboth. If John would rebuke Herod he must let his own brother's wife alone. If Paul would convince Felix of temperance, righteousness and judgment, he must be self-restrained, upright, and fear the judgment himself. Personal work demands character; a man may draw a check and not be consistent, but to win a man he must live what he advocates. The reason why so many Christians profit by unearned increment, pocket the surplus output as profit, corner the mar-



ket, oppress labor, take advantage of poverty, is that they are out of touch with the men they wrong. Paul, the slave of Christ, could plead for his fellow-slave, Onesimus, after they had been in a prison together. "One touch of Nature makes the whole world kin." Paul could not buy and sell Onesimus after he knew him. Paul must plead for the forgiveness of his master, after he knew him.

If the good Samaritan had cheated to get his oil and wine, had stolen his horse, had picked a pocket to get the coin with which he paid the landlord, Christ would never have bidden us follow his example, and we may be sure the Samaritan could not commit crime after his night with the stranger to make good his expenditure.

Mary's alabaster box would have been a curse, not a blessing if she had wronged labor to get it; if she had cheated a laborer of his hire, Christ would never have commended her. Joseph's tomb would have been a valley of Hinnom if the owner had wronged the workmen who cut it from the rock. The proof that Zaccheus was saved is found in righteous instincts. If after his interview with Christ he had gone out to wrong men, using his friendship with Christ as a cover, Christ's coming would have been a curse. And yet Christian men do wrong their fellows, men who support the Church are guilty of cruelty and dishonesty, and unrighteousness. Judas was a follower of Jesus, and founded a cemetery by his gift of blood money. The surest cure for all that is personal work. The man who seeks to save is in little danger of trying to wreck.

The evangel is as old as the heart of God, as new as the need of man, Evangelism is as old as the Master, as new as the servant. Personal Contact. Not one dealing with many, but one dealing with one, personal touch, sharing yourself with the next man. You cannot wrong the man you are trying to save, rob the man you are

trying to enrich, crush the man you are trying to redeem. Nearness to men compels nearness to Christ; nearness to Christ assures fair dealing with men.

“If Jesus Christ is a man,  
And only a man, I say,  
That of all mankind I will cleave to Him  
And cleave to Him alway.

“If Jesus Christ is a God,  
And the only God, I swear  
I will follow Him through heaven and hell,  
The earth, the sea, and the air.”

If we do, we shall follow Him in personal work, if we do that we shall be kept from the cruelty that crushes men, and the dishonesty that dishonors Christ.