Our Contributors.

THE CHURCH AS AN EVANGELIZER.

"Covet earnestly the best gifts; and yet show I unto you a more excellent way," is a good admonition to an organized group of Christians. "The best gifts" are those that bring to all concerned the greatest good. Jesus was the best gift of God. The redeemed, the church, the best gift of Christ. The church's best gift is the evangelization of the world, whether done by apostles, prophets, teachers, or through miracles, and that as quickly as possible. The quickest is slow enough. Let me consider here the church as an evangelizer. The church must either change her doctrines or put more emphasis on the work of evangelization. The former, from a worldly point of view, is the easier, but the more costly. No change in doctrines unless it can be clearly shown that some of her present "treatises of faith" partake too much of the mould through which they passed. But why should the church emphasize evangelistic work? Because for this the church was instituted. And yet the road to death is both broad and crowded, while in the upward climbing is too often seen a lonely traveller, heavenward bound. Mighty responsibilities are upon the church; deeper and more solemn convictions take hold of her. Hell is more terrible than a literal fire. How awful to the ungodly is eternity, and how searching the judgment of the world! The doom, how terrible! Who goes down to rescue? No wonder no other organization dares undertaken it. Among the brave should there be one whose courage fails? A line, a life boat, a light, a sword, a salve, something for each one. What a picture! The whole church, organized and at work. This is work worthy of the church, an apology for it is an injustice to God and men.

Looking to others and depending on an employed evangelist to do this work has not greatly helped the denominations that have always been evangelistic in their spirit and methods. It has been fashionable, and the easier way, but little strength, and often weakness, has resulted. Some churches have quickly recovered, while the pastorless churches will with great difficulty advance, especially if in the vicinity of other denominations.

The employed-evangelist custom does not satisfy the cravings of the church for the unconverted. Good has been done, but how difficult it is many times to use the newly converted talent, while many of the undecided are left with an impregnable feeling, which will generally spread rapidly in the community?

The church knows better the conditions of the people, and with modern helps to religious life and thought, is, in Jesus' name, better able, or ought to be, to bring all to Jesus Christ. It has not been done, but the failure has been due more than anything else to the disregard of the one rule of lifting up Christ. "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

The church only is connected with the unconverted in assisting them in building a spiritual foundation, upon which all future experiences will much depend. Eleven months of this work is better than three weeks. A convert's usefulness and faithfulness in Christ's service will much depend on the convert's associations and thoughts prior to conversion. It is not always wise to strongly urge men to accept Christ. There is often an absence of good teaching in the past, or poor surroundings in the future. Some might think these good reasons for strongly urging conversion, but they are only reasons for good conversion. The conversion of a soul must not only be considered from the points of view of his own personal value, but from the standpoint of helpfulness to others. Therefore the unquestionableness of nine out of ten conversions is better than twenty that have been questioned by their departure from the path of rectitude.

If the work of evangelization is left to the employed evangelist, it will be soon out of question to procure one. For the unconverted will question the mission of the church that resorts to this method rather than go out of existence. The church's apostolic attractiveness in swaying the minds of the hearers is gone. A step downward, and a needless breach in her wall of defence have been made. But how few of the world's great men have been converted by the employed-evangelist method? How few of our ministers get into the kingdom this way. From this take a universal view.

I am not condemning the employed evangelist method, but showing how the church loses power. I doubt if the church, as a rule, really feels that the salvation of men is depending on its faithfulness to God in effectual and personal work among the unconverted. The evangelist or minister, the church thinks, must do this. But the fact is they are only leaders; the church is the exponent of truth and a greater one than the evangelist's sermon or prayers. In my experience the best revivals have come about by the co-operation of an undivided and heavenly-minded church.

The greatest force for good, all things being equal, is the life which is constantly among unconverted, and not the man who is occasionally seen. Therefore, in proportion as a strong religious life, true to the very core, necessarily convictive and ennobling, is continually before the unconverted, without blot or stain; so will a living church be in that community to draw men unto Him. This work by the church cannot be done inpromptu. Sometimes it has been said that our fathers made no preparation for their work. This is a mischievous error, and has been the hurt of many a Christian. The truth is our fathers were men whose hearts were in the work, whose best days were spent in the field, and whose best blood was shed for Christ's cause, and for men whose temptations were like theirs. Read or think of something which they said, and hold it up in the light of this age, and behold its fire and power. No wonder sinners in their day cried out, "What shall I do to be saved?" You may not do your work inpromptu, but many of our churches think the least of their means of grace for worship. I don't mean united prayers or testimonies (to which I would not always object, but a careful personal inquiry before going to church, "What shall I render to my Lord?" The fruit might not be apparent, but, nevertheless, the work ought to be done.

The church as an evangelizer will remember that a conviction to be heard is not only necessary, but that her piety must deepen. Many a man has said, I shall be heard, but in practice he has been a poor apology for his words. Jesus did not say, "All power is given unto me," until in Gethsemane he fought, and in the hands of his cruel foes he became passive. And when this power came, it was self-acquired, as well as given by his Father, which he received. Why are his words with authority? Why so much impregnated with divinity? Why a miracle worker? Because his life was unimpeachable, a living Gibraltar to the assaults of darkness, a triumphant victor, a shining light illuminating the darkness. The words without the life are forceless. The great Saviour of men, before accomplishing his most heroic deeds, went down in human closets to entrench himself against most formidable foes and to strengthen his vision of faith in his Father. A look, a prayer, a thought, "Father, remove this cup, nevertheless not my will, but thine be done." And then listen to his charge to the guards, "Sleep on now," calmly, but with an immortal awakening in their souls. See him "lifted up," not applaudingly, but ignominously by his foes. But heaven paints the other scene, "gloriously." Monarchs did not see the hidden colors, or they in envy would have broken their earthly diadems. Never since have there been listless angels in heaven. Never since has Satan doubted the efficacy of a divine and human stratagem. The often too-much-humanly-limited church, the body of Christ, for strength, must go down, not to retreat, but to get life, plans power, to do most effectively and completely the mission of her Lord —the evangelization of the world.

A. H. McLeod.

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A Good Example. — The London *Daily News*, one of the greatest newspapers in the world, refuses all advertisements of alcoholic liquors, and it will not publish betting or racing news. Great as was its business prosperity before, it is said that since adopting the new policy its prosperity has greatly increased. Many Canadian papers might, with advantage to themselves and the public, follow the example of the great London daily.

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