

CHRISTIAN EVANGELISM IN THE EARLY CHURCH

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was carried on chiefly by laymen. Why not? The scattering of the early laymen meant the furtherance of the Kingdom of God. "And Saul was consenting unto his (Stephen's) death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles . . . As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house and hailing men and women committing them to prison. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." (Acts 8:14) The scattering of the Holy Ghost laymen (note "except the Apostles") meant the spreading of the holy fire in Christian evangelism. It blazed across the country. We have often wondered about many of our present day laymen who on having to move to a place where there is no deep spiritual life dry up or blackslide. The early church laymen did differently. They had a revival.

Christian evangelism is a life, a holy life, at least, a holy life issuing into a glorious spirit of evangelism. This is true in both ministry and laity, for there is no double standard. "Ye are . . . that ye might show forth," a condition of being and then out of that condition an issue of evangelistic activity, experience and then expression. Out of the many times the word "preach" is used in the New Testament, very few times it means what we attach to it, giving a message in public worship. In the majority of cases it means a talking about the things of God. Our life should be a sermon: "Ye are the epistles of Christ read and known of men." Some person said to Sir Walter Scott, "I want to write a book." Sir Walter Scott replied, "Be a book. That is better."

Christian evangelism, then, was more than organization, special meeting, methods, and such like: it was God in His fullness upon His church and people, producing a holy disposition on fire with the Holy Ghost, a divine fellowship, a sacred attitude, a holy passion, a holy force inflamed by the "spirit of burning" for the lost and dying and for the extension of the Kingdom of God upon earth. It is specifically that today. The job of the laymen, then, as well as the ministry, is this very work performed in this very way. Christian evangelism is the work of all and the work of every department of the church of Jesus Christ. When this is the order of the day in a church, holy revivals will be the order of the day. Amen!

THE FELLOWSHIP OF SUFFERING

R. Barclay Warren

A stern chapter in the history of human suffering is being written these days.

Many are those who have suffered for the kingdom of God. In some instances the suffering has been thrust upon them, as in the case of Job, and on the one who was born blind that the works of God might be manifest in him.—John 9.

Then there are those who have deliberately chosen the path that led to suffering, rather than sacrifice their loyalty to the principles of right. In some such cases God has intervened in behalf of these heroes, as for the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace and Daniel in the lion's den.

But in other instances there has been no mitigation of the suffering. Jeremiah, ac-

cused of disloyalty, spent days in hunger in the mire of the dungeon. John the Baptist went to prison and finally to the executioner's block because he charged the king with adultery. Stephen was stoned to death. Paul said, "Five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;—in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness."

But there is another type of suffering which involves the mind and spirit. Jesus suffered in spirit as He looked upon the Pharisees and was grieved for the hardness of their hearts, and as he wept over Jerusalem and in Gethsemane. Lot vexed his righteous soul from day to day with the unlawful deeds of the Sodomites. Jeremiah exclaimed, "Oh that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people." Paul adds to his list of suffering, "The care of all the churches. Who is weak and I am not weak? who is offended and I burn not?"

Paul wanted to share in Christ's sufferings. He affirmed the desire, "That I may know Him—and the fellowship of His sufferings." He also said, "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the church."

Are we grieved for the sin-stricken who have not found the remedy in Jesus Christ? Do we care? Are we willing to suffer in body and soul for Jesus Christ? Do we want to know the fellowship of His sufferings?

WHAT ARE WE TO CHRIST?

The Bible contains many figures and metaphors referring to the child of God—

"For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ" (2 Cor. 2:15).

The saintly Fenelon's life was so pure that Chesterfield said, "Another day spent with Fenelon and I will be compelled to become a Christian."

"Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistles of Christ" (2 Cor. 3:3).

The world reads these epistles before it it will read the written Word of God.

"Ye shall be witnesses unto me" (Acts 1:8).

A witness is one who tells the truth and cannot become confused in his testimony.

Profit by the boldness of Paul in his testimony before Felix, Agrippa, Nero, etc.

"I entreat thee also, true yokefellow" (Phil 4:3). True yokefellows share each other's burdens and labor together to the glory of God.

"Greet Priscilla and Acquilla, my helpers in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 16:3).

"Thank God for helpers who sit in the pew and pray us through." Helpers are the highest order in the church—servants of servants.

"As good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (I. Peter 4:10).

What a responsibility to be entrusted with the grace of God. Not entrusted for selfish use; but for distribution—that others may share it.

"Hath made us kings and priests unto God and his father" (Rev. 1:6).

Here is royalty and intercession.

God can speak and make worlds, but he must suffer to save.—Selected.

GO STRAIGHT TO YOUR POST

"Go straight to your post." Nathan did God said: "Go and speak;" and he went straight away, and spoke as he was commanded. Even so, let there be no excusing yourself about your inability and want of voice, or courage, or time, or something else, which too often means that you are too proud or worldly, or are altogether too ashamed of Jesus Christ and His cause, to be known to be on His side. No running away in some other direction, Jonah-like, and only squaring yourself up to duty after some kind of three days solitary confinement in the belly of some whale or other. No! No! No! Go off at once!—General Booth.

CAMP MEETINGS VS. PRESERVATION OF THE FAITH

Our God is a strategist. He sees and plans ahead. The age of apostasy through which we have been passing was prepared for by the great Commander in Chief of the hosts of the Lord, not only by leading men in different parts of the land to establish holiness schools of various types, but by the inauguration of the modern camp meeting here on our American soil. There is no doubt but the camp meetings of America during the past seventy-five years have exerted major influence in the preserving both the methods and the genuine results of true evangelism.

In a great conference of a certain church a few years ago, leading modernists were decrying evangelism and were presenting a religious education program as a substitute. The old bishop in charge of the conference gave them a pretty strong speech and then with a great congregation of Christian people before him, took a vote to know how many of the persons present who were saved had been saved either in a revival meeting, in the church, or in a camp meeting. The great audience was one sea of hands affirming their having been thus saved. It was a great rebuke to the attempted substitute for the evangelistic method of the camp meeting and of special revivalism in the church.

There is no way of computing the real results of camp meetings in the spiritual life of the church in our age. I have heard it said again and again during my own ministry that the camp meetings were dying out. This has been stated specially of the inter-denominational camp meetings. While it is true that changes have come locally in some places so that where great camp meetings were once held, other agencies have seemed to take the work over, on the whole, the camp meetings are prospering today. The ministry of evangelism fostered by the camps makes them centers where sinners are converted and believers are sanctified and every interest of the historic faith of Christianity is concerned.

Let us not lower our standards or slacken our pace in the upkeep of our camps during this great crisis of world tragedy. Let God's people rally and plan for their camps with increased zeal and loyalty.

From a seasoned old camp meeting worker.  
C. W. BUTLER

Put everything into God's hands. Tell Him all about the road that lies before you—the difficulties that seem to await you. Only thus can you go forward in perfect peace, without fear or worry; only thus can you be sure of divine guidance and deliverance.—Selected.