

PERSONAL EVANGELISM

By the Rev. Watson C. Black

This is a subject of great importance but one which I fear is much overlooked and neglected. For while not every man can be a great preacher to a great congregation, I believe every man can be a soul winner if he is willing to work with individuals. Henry Ward Beecher has said, "The longer I live, the more confidence I have in those sermons where one man is the minister and one is the congregation."

The Master's Method

Jesus said to His disciples, "Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men." Now the best way to learn how to become a good fisherman is to follow the examples of those who are good fishermen. The question may arise, by what method did Jesus win His followers? The answer is: A great many were won by personal work.

Every apostle was won by personal work. In fact every outstanding follower that was won to Christ in His early ministry was won by personal work. James and John as they mended their nets, Matthew as he sat at the seat of customs, Zacheus from the branches of a Sycamore tree, the Woman of Samaria at the well, the Man of Gadara in the tombs, and so on and on. Time will not permit us to go further.

The Disciples' Method

Then, too, this method was used by His disciples. When Andrew found Christ the Scripture says he went straightway and found his brother Peter and brought him to Christ. Philip found Nathaniel. So we see from the small band of Jesus and His disciples has come the great Church of Jesus Christ today with its millions of followers.

Peck in his book, "The Revival and the Pastor," says that if the Angel Gabriel were to come down and tell him that his chance of heaven depended upon his winning one thousand souls for Christ in ten years, that he might preach every day for ten years but might not do personal work outside the pulpit; or on the other hand, he might do personal work but might not enter the pulpit. He says, I would not hesitate but would stake my chances of heaven on winning those one thousand by personal work rather than trying to win them from the pulpit.

Luke says, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." Not only did He come to save but to seek the lost ones. Then he transferred His mission to the Church today when he said, "As My Father has sent Me, even so I send you." Jesus teaches us to leave the ninety and nine in the Church and seek that one which is lost.

A Need to Change Our Emphasis

We, as a Church, too long have been singing, "Hold the Fort," when we should be singing, "Onward Christian Soldiers," and not only singing it but putting it into practice. The question was asked Mr. Moody, "How shall we reach the masses?" His only answer was, "Go for them!"

Jesus said in the parable of the Great Supper, "Go out into the hedges and highways and compel them to come in." Too many are satisfied with just sending the invitation. In this parable there were three distinct invitations given. The first was "Come," and they offered excuses. The second was "Bring," and the

servant came back and said there is still room. The last was "Compel" them to come. Too many of us are satisfied with having a nice church building, comfortable pews and hearing a flowery sermon; but Jesus commands, "Go out and bring the people in."

The best preaching any pastor ever does is when he goes from house to house and tearfully warns men to flee the wrath to come. Winning one soul at a time usually results in winning a multitude of souls in a process of time, while addressing a multitude at one time may not result in winning even one soul for Christ.

Dr. Trumbull in his book, "Individual Work for Individuals," says: "For the past ten years I have addressed crowds ranging from ten to fifteen to crowds of five or six thousand people. I have travelled from Maine to California and from Minnesota to Florida; at the same time I was editor of a religious periodical that at times printed one hundred thousand per week, yet I saw greater results in my personal work than in both combined."

A Personal Experience

I truly believe that many can be won by personal work that otherwise may never be won to Christ. To illustrate, at one of my former pastorates there was a fine young man who attended the church regularly but made no confession of religion. He was seemingly unmoved by the preaching of the gospel, although many times we tried to say things that would fit his case. This went on for a couple of years and then one day we went to his home to talk with him personally about accepting Christ. To our happy surprise the following Sunday this young man found his way to the altar and was wondrously saved. The point I am trying to make is this, he was seemingly untouched by the preaching, yet a few simple words spoken personally to him was the means of winning him to Christ.

The question may arise, Why then, if it is such a great method, do so few practice it? I should say one reason is because some are afraid that this is not the proper time and if they do so it will hurt the person or the cause for which they are working. Paul exhorts, "Be instant in season and out of season," and I think that was what he was referring to. Another reason it is not practiced is because it seems so small or insignificant but we read, "Despise not the day of small things." In war the field artillery may be more impressive, but it is the single shots from the rifles and sharpshooters that bring down the most men. A third reason is because many lack the courage to give a personal invitation. Bossuet, the noted French preacher of a century ago, said: "It requires more faith and courage to say two words face to face with one single sinner than from the pulpit rebuke two or three thousand persons, ready to listen to anything on condition of forgetting all." Yes, it takes courage but God will reward us if we are faithful.

According to a report related by his sister, John Dillinger once knelt at an altar of prayer hungry to know God. But because of his record of petty crimes and a few months in a reform school he was looked upon as "Johnny, the bad boy," and nobody thought it was worth while to speak to him as he knelt there seeking God. Finally, he arose and walked out of the church saying to his sister as he passed her: "I am through with everything religious. I never intend to enter another church. Nobody tried to help me." A

number of years later he was shot down on the streets of Chicago—America's Public Enemy No. 1. Who knows but what a personal contact at the altar might have resulted in his being an outstanding evangelist rather than the notorious character that he was. Let us be personal soul winners.—Selected.

CONSCIENCE

R. Barclay Warren

Conscience is that faculty of your soul that judges of the right and wrong of your life, commending you when you do right and reproving you when you do wrong. We cannot boss our conscience. A word from us will not make it be quiet. But neither can conscience boss us. We can go on to evil even while conscience is ringing the alarm bell.

Conscience can be injured. If we persist in ignoring its protests, its voice will grow fainter. One may have his "conscience seared with a hot iron" (I. Tim. 4:2). The searing removes sensitivity.

Can conscience be wrong? It always urges us to do what we think is right. But our conception of right may actually be wrong. The woman of India who throws her baby girl into the Ganges River to please the gods may be obeying her conscience, but she is doing wrong. Saul was conscientious when he persecuted the followers of Jesus. But when his conscience was enlightened by the revelation of Jesus Christ to his soul, he became a fervent exponent of the faith that he had attacked. Being conscientious and sincere will not save us. We must yield ourselves entirely to the will of God, and let our conscience be guided by the Word of God.

Conscience may remind us of an evil deed long since committed. Twenty years had passed; but hear the brethren of Joseph reproach themselves: "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us."

David's conscience reproved him of adultery and murder, and he gave us the great Psalm of repentance, Psa. 51. Herod, hearing of the works of Jesus, said, "It is John, whom I beheaded." A look from Jesus aroused Peter's conscience, and he went out and wept bitterly. Judas threw down the money he had received, and went out and hanged himself.

If we come to the last judgment, without having partaken of God's salvation provided through His Son Jesus Christ, conscience will acquiesce in our condemnation. But if we have received His Son, conscience will approve of the commendation of the Great Judge.

Have a pure conscience!

WHAT ARE YOU?

An attender or an absentee?
A pillar or a sleeper?
A wing or a weight?
A power or a problem?
A promoter or a provoker?
A giver or a getter?
A goer or a gadder?
A doer or a deadhead?
A booter or a bucker?
A supporter or a sponger?
A soldier or a sorehead?
A worker or a warrior?
A friend or a fault-finder?
A helper or a hinderer?
A campaigner or a camper? —Exchange