

ARTICLE X.

SOME NEEDED FACTORS IN THE "NEW
EVANGELISM."

BY THE REVEREND CHARLES H. RICHARDS, D.D.

WE are hearing much in these days of the "new evangelism." A great expectancy is in the air. In all the churches there is a deep longing for that breath of Divine power which shall rekindle the fire of faith and holy purpose in their members, and bring into the new life multitudes who have never known it. Evangelistic committees and campaigns are being employed to secure this desired result. It is a good time to consider certain needed factors in the work which will help to make it successful.

Those who use the term "new evangelism" do not mean, of course, a new evangel. There is no such thing. The "old, old story," which has charmed the ages, and brought life and joy to increasing millions through the Christian centuries, can never be superseded. The old gospel, which has Bethlehem and Calvary for its resplendent foci, is just as precious and powerful to-day as ever.

Neither do they mean that former evangelistic methods are to be altogether discarded. As in the apostolic age God "gave some to be evangelists," so he has continued to do ever since. There will always be room for the exceptional man whom God has anointed for this special service. When a Whitefield, or a Finney, or a Moody arises, with the fire of a mighty conviction in his heart, and a resistless passion for souls driving

him into the field, he will always be welcome. When an Evan Roberts in Wales, or a Campbell Morgan in London, or a Dawson in the cities of America, brings a Pentecostal blessing, we shall rejoice with him in the harvest of ingathering.

It would appear, then, that those who use this term mean rather a new method of presentation of the old gospel, adapted to the conditions of our modern life; a separation of its essentials from the dead-weight of pious fancies and superfluous additions which some good men have fastened upon it; a new emphasis upon some of its neglected features; and a return to some methods of Christian service formerly found effective, but which have fallen into disuse.

It is with this understanding of the term that attention is here called to *Some Needed Factors in the "New Evangelism,"* a right use of which may enable every pastor and every church to secure something of the longed-for blessing, either with or without the aid of a special evangelist.

UNFETTERING THE GOSPEL.

The first of these is the Unfettering of the Gospel, that it may have its full, proper, unhindered power over the minds, hearts, and wills of men.

What do we mean by unfettering the gospel? We mean breaking the shackles of a too meager and cramped conception of the gospel, and setting it free to exert its full power over men, which can only be when it is apprehended and presented in its completeness. We have been prone to lay stress too exclusively on certain features of it, to the neglect of certain other features which ought to have received equal emphasis. We have, for example, pressed to the front the governmental and forensic aspects of salvation, till many have failed to see it as a transforming vitality, implanted and nourished by Christ, which by the power of his new life brings man

up to the beauty and glory of God's ideal. We have thought of it too much as merely a way of deliverance from penalty; rather than as the way into a noble and glorious life, where man can realize his highest possibilities. We have presented Christ, perhaps, too exclusively as a sacrifice upon the altar of God, and not with equal emphasis as the power of a new life in the soul, which will enable it to attain its full birthright as a child of God. We have put too much emphasis on getting ready to die; and not enough on the splendid opportunity of rising into the eternal life here and now, so that heaven may begin with us on the spot. Thus certain features of the gospel have been neglected till they have become atrophied and powerless as far as many men are concerned. We have too often wound the fettering cables of our theological metaphors, and doctrinal definitions, and medieval notions about the gospel till we have made it a crippled captive, unable to exert its full power.

To illustrate this over-emphasis on certain aspects of the gospel to the neglect of others, let us recall the fact that the Golden Rule is the concentrated epitome of Christ's teaching in practical religion; yet it is surprising to see, on examination, what cavalier treatment it has received from commentators and theologians. Look at the eight volumes of Jonathan Edwards, the six volumes of Nathaniel Emmons, the eight volumes of Andrew Fuller, great leaders of a former day; while they treat many great themes, they make scant reference to the passages in which Christ sets forth this law of life. The social unrest of our day has compelled modern ministers to give it more attention than formerly, but it is regarded as rather an aside, than as part of the main staple of the gospel.

The hymns of the church reflect and express its thought

and feeling quite accurately; yet when we look over our hymnals, and especially the so-called "Gospel Songs" with which we are training our young people, we can hardly fail to be struck with the fact that they are heavily overweighted on certain themes and painfully lacking in others. The theoretical and sentimental side of religion has a copious supply of hymns; the practical side has relatively little. You can select from a wealth of material a hymn of adoration or prayer, of noble thought about the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit, of trust or peace or comfort, of death or heaven. But you hunt often vainly for a suitable hymn about the home, or social reform, or the brotherhood of man, or that heaven on earth which Christ means to establish. The best modern books are improving in this respect, but there is still a dearth of material on religion as a Christ-life in daily affairs.

Now we shall unfetter the gospel when we get as broad a conception of its meaning and application as Christ had. When we lift up Christ as indeed the Life and Light of the world,—a Light that can illumine every possible problem of human experience, a Life that can unite itself with every other life which will receive it, and by its transforming vitality can purge out all elements that weaken and destroy, and can develop a nobility, a strength, and a joy like his own,—then there will be new power in the "glad tidings." We must show men more clearly that Christ is a Saviour for our daily needs, giving mastery over the evil of to-day, giving courage and patience and power and victory in the battles of the present. We must tell them that the Christian need not worry about the eternal years of the future, because Christ helps him to bring the eternal life down to date, living as he lives.

This will lead us to see and show more distinctly that the gospel means *righteousness*. Mr. Moody showed his wisdom,

and gained great power, by his tremendous insistence that a righteous life is essential in a Christian. There is no "good news" for any man who persistently clings to his sin. There are no "glad tidings" for any man who defiantly sets himself against the Divine order of the universe, and mocks at the eternal laws which everywhere alike declare and fulfill the sovereign will of God. One might as well defy Niagara, and step into the rapids; or defy Vesuvius, and plunge into its boiling crater. Christ comes to save no man in his sin; but only out of his sin. He saves, not by enabling a man to evade God's law, or to escape the natural result of its working, but by bringing him into such a way of life that all the laws of God's universe work together for his blessing.

Men say the coming revival will be an ethical revival. It is needed. There is too often a tacit belief that religion and morality are quite different things. There are people who fancy that if they trust God and accept Christ as Saviour, they need not be overcareful about conduct, because the law of penalty will be suspended for them. And so there grows up a double life in many professed Christians in our churches,—piety on Sundays and Wednesday evenings, but a reckless disregard of the principles and spirit of Christ in their business or their pleasure. We need to explode that fallacy. Men must be made to see that morality, which means living according to the will of God, is the largest half of religion, and that if a man is not earnestly endeavoring to live a pure, upright and Christlike life, the less said about his religion the better.

We must also see and show that the gospel means *brotherhood*. We must make it plain that the law of love, which is the very heart of Christianity, is not an "iridescent dream," but is a practicable rule of life which must govern us in all our dealings with our fellow-men. We must make men un-

derstand that the kingdom of heaven means a social regeneration, in which the rampant selfishness which now too largely rules the world will be subdued, and that instead of the fierce and cruel wars between nations, and classes, and business enterprises, and individuals, there is coming an era of peace born of fraternity. Instead of competition, there will be co-operation; instead of strikes, arbitration; instead of the combination of a few to exploit the many for selfish gain, there will be the combination of the many for the common welfare, in which all will share. There must come the time, as Christ gets more power in human life, when "all men's good will be each man's law," and when every man will regard every other man on earth as his brother, and will treat him so.

We must also see and show that the gospel means *truth*, and all truth. Its Founder declared himself to be the Truth; his kingdom was simply the kingdom of Truth. Nor did he limit this to any particular kind of truth. Every fact, every reality in the universe, belongs to his realm. He calls us into his kingdom that he may by his Spirit guide us unto all truth. As his disciples we are not afraid of any truth, however startling, and we stand ready to welcome all truth, however new, or from whatever quarter it may appear. The church has sometimes been accused of cowardice in the presence of new truth. And it must be admitted that the leaders have often trembled and stood aghast before the unwelcome discoveries of scholars. Copernicus and Newton, and Hugh Miller and Darwin, threw many Christians into spasms of hysterical fear for a little, till it became manifest that their discoveries did not impair in the least the foundations of faith, and actually brought new illumination to the great realities of religion. The new evangelism will not be afraid of science or scholarship. It will take advantage of all the new knowledge, and

will use it as a weapon from the hand of God to win new victories for his kingdom.

This broader conception of the gospel will, we may believe, give it new power over men. The new evangelism will not fail to give full expression to the other half of religion already familiar, but it will bring up into its proper prominence this neglected half. It will put new emphasis on the ethics of Christ. It will arouse conscience, exalt duty, and summon men to live nobly the life that now is. It will not be weakly sentimental, nor unduly emotional, seeking conversions chiefly by appeals to the feelings. It will appeal to the intellect to receive the truth, to the heart to desire a noble life, to the will to choose the right because it is right. There will be a virility in song and sermon which will appeal to all that is manliest in men. A masculine vigor will throb through its presentation of truth which will lay hold on manhood and greatly increase the proportion of men in our churches and congregations.

Already there are signs that many are getting these larger views of Christian truth, and these new methods of presenting it are coming rapidly into use.

DORMANT FORCES.

The next need is to rouse into activity certain Dormant Forces which are of great importance in the work of saving men.

The great task of winning disciples of Christ is so vast and difficult that it demands every variety of talent and of effort. No one class of workers, no one method of work, is sufficient. It needs all. The evangelist will still be needed at times, with his method of continuous appeal in meetings held day after day. The heart-searching songs that thrill the soul with the language of emotion will still be needed. But too great dependence must not be placed upon these means. When con-

versions are few, and the spiritual life of the church is low, men are apt to say, "We must have a revival: send for the evangelist." But this process oft repeated leaves the church weaker than before, and the spasms of excited feeling leave the outside community more callous and hard to reach. Mr. Moody came to feel that his earlier methods had considerably lost power, and he was more desirous in his later years to set the churches on fire to do their own work. The new evangelism, while at times employing the unusual methods of the professional evangelist, may well return to the employment of certain agencies which have fallen somewhat into disuse, as a constant means of soul-winning. Always important factors in the kingdom of Christ, they are destined to become more efficient and powerful instruments in securing conversions. They are to be God's sickles for God's harvest as never before.

We get a clue to what is needed in that verse descriptive of the early church (Acts v. 42) which tells us that "Every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ." This suggests the threefold need of to-day, as well as of the time when these words were written. It hints the dormant forces that must be brought into renewed activity.

There must be an *evangelizing home life*. "At home they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ." It is a significant fact that the earliest churches were in the homes. Men "went from house to house, breaking bread" in memory of the Lord, and telling the story of his life and death. "Salute the church in the house of Nymphas," wrote the Apostle. Rhoda, the girl who went to the gate when Peter knocked, after his deliverance from prison; and little Timothy, the boy convert of Lystra, were the fruit of piety in the home-circle. The admirable Jewish home training in religion passed

over into Christian households, so that whole families were often all disciples. What we call the church was simply the expansion of the Christian home, a larger family, and depended for its power on fidelity in the home.

And in all Christian history the home has been one of the most important factors in the advancement of the kingdom. Many of the leaders of the Christian host were brought into the Christian life in childhood, through the faith and work of devout parents. Germany, Great Britain, and America have been the great home lands, out of whose Christian households, where the father has been the high-priest at the family altar in the daily devotion, and the mother's prayers and loving training have been a mighty molding power, there has arisen an army of valiant workers for Christ. In the "Cotter's Saturday Night," Burns graphically shows how the Scottish religion was rooted in the piety of the home life. The Puritan households in England and America were the fruitful nurseries of Christian character, out of which came multitudes into the church.

But of late years there has been manifest an alarming tendency to neglect home religion. From multitudes of Christian homes the family altar has disappeared. Life is at such high pressure, there is such a rush for business and pleasure, there is no time to pray together. Grace at meals has vanished from many family tables: it is too old-fashioned and out-of-date. By a good many Christian parents the religious training of children is handed over almost entirely to the Sunday-school and Christian Endeavor Societies. These are very valuable aids to supplement the careful and thorough home training, but they can never take the place of the careful teaching of truth and daily drill in religious duty which the father and mother ought to give.

The new evangelism will bring us back to realize the fact,

that, if our churches are to have power in the future, if they are to increase in numbers and in a sturdy and practical piety, they must be replenished from an evangelizing home life. Bushnell's idea of "Christian Nurture" is the true one, and fathers and mothers must expect to lead and teach and train and pray their children into the kingdom of God. It is the holy work which has been intrusted to them with the gift of children. They should aim directly at developing Christian faith and character in their children, lead them early to make personal choice of Christ as Saviour and Master, train them to love the church by habitual attendance there, and encourage them to make an early confession of him by uniting with his church. If there are ten million Christian homes in our country, there ought to be at least a million young Christians brought into the church this year as the natural fruitage of such an evangelizing home life.

There must also be an *evangelizing pastorate* to a greater extent than has ever been known hitherto.

The ministry of Christ's church in all the Christian centuries has been, on the whole, a faithful, earnest body of consecrated men, eager to do Christ's work, and trying to do it in the best way possible. There have been exceptions, of course; corrupt men, in high places; venal men, anxious only for temporal rewards; indolent men, shirking duty, and living as much at their ease as possible; scheming men, insincere and cunning in adroit efforts to promote their selfish ambitions. The minister, after all, is only human nature under a black frock. Yet these are the comparatively rare exceptions. The ministry as a whole is a hard-working, self-denying, thoroughly earnest army of Christian soldiers, with hearts set on winning the greatest possible victories for the kingdom of

God. There is nothing they so much long for as the salvation of men.

Yet they have often been sadly hampered by tradition or training, so that their arduous efforts have failed of the best results. They have been led to lay undue stress upon theology, or upon literary finish, or upon the critical study of the Bible, or upon various forms of philanthropic work. All these are highly important. They must not be neglected, and ought to receive their due share of attention. But they may easily absorb so much time and thought as to divert attention and effort from the main object of the ministry, viz. the ingathering and upbuilding of Christians. The minister is, first of all, a "fisher of men." That is his special vocation. He is sent to make disciples. It is his business to get men to believe in Christ, to enlist them into Christ's service, and then to develop them into a strong and splendid manhood after Christ's pattern. No delights of study, no ambition to be a master of style, no fad of social reconstruction, should be allowed to turn him aside from this main object of his life-work. It is time that we waked up to the fact that a pastor must be all the time aiming at immediate results in winning souls. He ought to become an expert in convincing men of their duty and privilege in respect to a religious life, and in persuading them to be outspoken Christians. And if anything would arouse us to the necessity for this, it would seem that the appalling rows of zeros in the columns of additions to the churches on confession of faith in all our denominations would do it. It would seem that with many ministers the winning of souls to Christ has become a "lost art."

Now St. Paul, writing to the young pastor at Ephesus, said, "Do the work of an evangelist." He did not say, "Wait for an evangelist to come along to do the work for you." He

did not say, "Send for Apollos, for he is a mighty man, and you may expect a great revival when he gets upon the field." On the contrary, his message was, "Do the evangelizing yourself." And I think the injunction of the wise apostle to all our pastors would be the same to-day, "Do the work of an evangelist." Plan for ingathering. Aim at results. Drive home the truth to the conscience and heart as a whaler drives home his harpoon, and then hang on to your man till you bring him in after all his struggle against the truth. There can be no doubt that this can be done if pastors set themselves resolutely to the work. When they are more interested in men than in newspapers, or pet doctrines, or hobbies, or their own ease, they will work persistently to enlist them for Christ, and they will succeed.

Nothing ought to satisfy a pastor—no literary success, no fame as a champion of doctrine, no ecstatic experience—which does not include success in winning souls. That was an instructive incident at Northfield, when a minister rose in one of the great summer meetings and with glowing face said, "Brethren, I have been on the Mount of Transfiguration for five years!" Quick as a flash, Mr. Moody turned his searching eye upon him, and asked, "How many souls did you bring into the church last year?" "I don't know," was the hesitating reply. "Did you save any?" persisted Mr. Moody. "I cannot say I did," was the regretful answer. "We don't want any more mountain-top experiences like that," said the faithful Moody. "If a man gets up so high that he can't reach down and get hold of sinners, there's something wrong."

There must be also an *evangelizing church*. This does not mean a church that plans for what we call evangelistic services; nor one that delights in having its pastor do all the evangelizing for it. But it means a church that sets itself with

all its heart, and with all its energy, at the work of converting men and women, young and old, and bringing them into its membership as active participants in the work of Christ's kingdom. This is what a church is for. It is organized not merely for coöperative *worship*, but for coöperative *work* as well. And the latter should be threefold: the culture of personal Christian life, by united study and mutual help; the ministry of loving service to the needy; and work for the salvation of others. And of these three, the last is foremost in importance. It is the especial commission of our Lord. His intent has been well expressed in the striking phrase "the church is a Society of Saviours."

And this work must be carried on by every method possible. There is preventive work to be done. We must get the start of the powers of evil by preëmpting young souls with gospel influences before the devil gets his clutch firmly fixed upon them. The Sunday-school should be a training-school of character, in which children should be drilled in knowledge of Christian truth and practice. The Christian Endeavor Society should be a nursery of faith and life in the young people, developing in them the spirit of prayer and service. And out of them both there should be a constant stream of members into the church. These are most important aids in the great work when rightly used. An evangelizing church will not neglect them, nor leave them to be carried on by a few while the majority never come near them. The whole church will realize that these are valuable instruments for its special work, and will rally to encourage and support them, swelling their numbers, and assisting in the work. The same may be said of a still later agency for service that has risen into prominence in many of our churches—the Brotherhood of Andrew and Philip, which enlists men in special work for men,

and which has vindicated its right to be by its signal usefulness in many churches.

But the evangelizing church has a still more important and fruitful method of service in its great aim of saving men; that is the direct personal effort of its individual Christians. Every member should undertake to be a soul-winner. Each should live so manifestly under the mastery of Christ, ordering the conduct according to his principles, and showing his spirit in all the relationships of life, that the example would draw others toward the same way of life. Each should be a glad witness-bearer for the Master, cheerfully giving testimony to the helpfulness, the power, and the joy of having Christ in the life. And each should have courage enough, and earnestness enough, to invite others to enter the way of life, and persuade them to come into the family of Christ. It would seem as though some Christians found it easier to ask their friends to join a university extension class than to enter the school of Christ; easier perhaps to ask them to join a progressive-euchre party, or a box-party at the theater, than to come into that circle that seeks to learn of Christ the way of the ideal life, and that seeks to make of our world a kingdom of heaven. That will no longer be, when each Christian has a passion for souls like that which moved the Apostle Paul, who in one brief chapter repeats five times his eager longing in the phrase "if I might save some."

Nor is it expecting impossibilities to look forward to the enlistment of all our members in the direct work of ingathering. They can do it if they will. Even the humblest and weakest has a power which will produce results in this direction. Mr. Spurgeon had a rare power of getting his members to engage in this individual work, and the growth of his immense church was due in large measure to this. Mr. Moody laid great

stress on the importance of this, and had great faith that he would see immediate fruit from it. He tells us that when he was superintendent of his great Sunday-school in Chicago, a teacher came to him one day, saying that he was seriously ill and had been ordered away from Chicago, and that his great grief was that, of his class of twenty young ladies, not one was a professed Christian, and he had never asked one of them to become one. "Let us go and see them now," said Moody; and before the astonished teacher could realize it, a carriage was ordered, and the two men were on the way to make the rounds of that class. With tearful eyes and kindly words, that teacher presented the duty and privilege to each of those young ladies, and urged as his last and perhaps his dying request that each should at once become a Christian, and an open and declared Christian. They melted at his entreaty. Next day they were all at the station to see him off with tender farewells, and every one of that class accepted the invitation, and became a Christian and a member of Christ's church.

Note a single illustration of what an earnest church can do in this direction if it will. A short time since a distinguished pastor of one of the largest and most active Presbyterian churches in the country, presented this matter with great clearness and power to his people, and asked for the enlistment of special workers, each of whom should endeavor to bring one new member into the church at the next communion. One hundred and nineteen members gave him their names for this service; and at the next communion he had the joy of welcoming one hundred and thirty-six new members into his church as the result of this effort. This was not only glorious in itself, but better for the church and community than if the same result had been produced by special meetings under a professional evangelist.

There is need of such evangelizing churches to-day. Never was the call for earnest, self-sacrificing action louder or more urgent than now. The sordid ideals that creep in with our enormous material prosperity seem to have benumbed and paralyzed many in our churches. And they have increased the spiritual indifference and worldliness outside of our churches. To many people the chief good is Money; and Pleasure is the second. For these two things many live, at an awful sacrifice of principle, character, manhood. From many quarters we hear the lament over shrinking congregations in the churches, and greater difficulty in enlisting the attention and interest of the unconverted. Men and women are in danger of being animalized by greed and selfishness, and in the rush for mere worldly pleasures they make an awful waste of the better life. And with the depression of moral life in the community, vice and crime increase in prevalence and intensity. There has recently been an appalling increase of murder, lynching, suicide, theft, embezzlement, divorce, and gross immorality. Our great cities have plague-spots in them where one might think he was in Sodom. And all this means ruin for manhood and womanhood.

Can nothing be done to save these thousands plunging downward to unspeakable disaster? Yes, Christ is equal to the emergency. He can save unto the uttermost every lost one who will turn to him. He can save our cities. He can save the world. What he asks is the hearty coöperation of every follower.

And when the new evangelism enlists all these forces in earnest work with him, and we have an evangelizing home life, an evangelizing pastorate, and an evangelizing church everywhere, we shall see marvelous triumphs for his kingdom.