

tenderly invited them could not have been meant to refer to the few remaining hours of His earthly life. Obviously, He was looking onward to the life beyond. It was to vital union with Him in His resurrection life that He was calling them. It would be given to them, if they would take the gift, to abide in Him, their Risen Lord, as the branch in the vine; to draw from Him, as the branch from the vine, everything that they needed for abundant life and for fruit-bearing to the glory of God. It is almost too much for faith to grasp—that each one of us should be in real, living, personal touch with the Risen Christ, so that He responds to every genuine need of our soul, as the vine to each branch's every requirement. But we have it from His own lips. This, then, is how He saves us day by day from sin. He keeps us spiritually healthy by union with Him. And to all who abide in Him He throws out the royal challenge, "Ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you." It is so that He saves us by His life. It is so that His words are fulfilled, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

EVANGELIZATION.

BY THE REV. CANON LILLINGSTON, M.A.

I ALMOST blush to find myself at this time of day called on to read a paper on "Evangelization." It ought surely to be the most familiar topic, discussed all round and everywhere in Christian circles, whereas we rarely hear it mentioned—and when it is, the interest is not really marked. I say this without any hesitation, because Evangelism is of the very essence of our life and work. We may have much to do, but there is nothing which has such a claim upon our thoughts, our prayers, our strength. Admit, if you will, that our first duty is to worship God, but you must go on to allow that our second duty is to evangelize our fellow-men. "The Gospel is by its very nature designed for proclamation; it has not begun to be what it aims at being till it is proclaimed"—and, as the author of *Ecce Homo* puts it, "The article of conversion is the article of a standing or falling Church."

This being so, there is something wrong, very wrong, if every Christian has not an Evangelistic spirit and fervour; not that all have Evangelistic gifts, but all can have and ought to have Evangelistic power which can be exercised by intercession, faithful testimony and worthy living. The greatest trial of an earnest pastor is the sense that he is doing his work alone. He is surrounded by a body of kind and regular communicants, but few,

if any, of them share with him any passion for souls, and are working at the winning of souls.

An earnest Layman thus describes the position: "I have visited many churches in different parts of the country. I find nothing wrong or wanting when dealing with the material side of Church work. If money is needed, however much, it is forthcoming when the need is made known. But more than one has spoken to me of the absence of keen interest in the spiritual things of the Church."

The reasons for this (which will not be much disputed) may be many, but the chief are not hard to seek. Firstly: We have not taught our people that they are equally responsible with us for the lost, that the whole Church was commissioned by the Risen Lord (S. John xx.) to go forth and continue His task. This is fatal, for Evangelism in the Church will never expand to its true greatness so long as it is regarded as an exclusively clerical interest. "The universal priesthood of believers is our flag," but rare is it to find that priesthood so put to work that outsiders are led to believe in God. Secondly: The imperious motive of personal affection for Christ Himself is lacking. If this fire burn low on the altar, how shall hearts be kindled into sacrificial flame? Roland Allen and others have shown us quite clearly that those who in the primitive Church and in any age have had power to save the lost, though they differed often in methods and even in some doctrines, have been alike in this; they were all baptized into the love of souls for Christ's sake. If we corrected this—and we can—we shall have great results; not the least shall we find that our appeal for young men for the ministry meets with a hearty response. Few gifted men are now offering for this, because there is nothing much doing, nothing much to do; and they will hold back so long as all that they are wanted for are hollow forms, empty sacraments, and lifeless prayers.

As for the need of this work, there can be no question. It is definitely recognized and ought to burden every member of Christ. It is said that when Dr. Thomas Chalmers found that in Glasgow 30,000 people had no connection with the churches, he was troubled and said that in God's Name this thing must come to an end. What would he say if he returned and found that in Glasgow to-day 400,000 people have no religious association? The Bishop of London has, I believe, expressed the opinion that only 3 per cent. of London's population are regular attenders at public worship.

When some lady pilgrims went forth in a campaign in 1920 to stir up missionary zeal in a certain diocese, they returned with sad hearts because their task was mainly fruitless, as the people needed evangelizing themselves!

How is Evangelization to be carried on? What is the plan and programme? This is a practical point and one on which we meet to help one another. Disturbed and unsettled as our times are, there is much divergence of opinion, men talking about a new

presentation of the old message, and not able to explain what they mean. Such divergences, however, need not divide us; rather let them bring us into closer touch with each other as we wait on the Holy Spirit for His guidance—and try to explore and understand the situation as we have it to-day. Probably I can best serve the Conference by offering for consideration my own opinions in a plain and frank manner. They are mainly concerned with three different parties which seem to require attention if Evangelization is to be a reality, and if the Spirit of God is to find conditions prevailing which are favourable to His operations. I would emphasize this point because there is an apparent tendency to expect the work of the Holy Spirit to be carried on, apart from our care and prayer—and apart from the humble earnest preparations which we can make and are expected to make for His Presence and His activity in our midst.

(1) First let me say that the personal attitude of the heart and mind of us clergy must be watched as never before. That is to say, it is vital that we see to it that our own spiritual life and tone be well ordered and maintained if we are to make our message carry. There is need to say this because of the many evidences that men are not enjoying free and happy communion with God as our fathers did. I know a brother who has been in hospital on two different occasions. Four Bishops have visited him, but not one of them prayed with him in his weakness and need. They were as kind and as friendly as could be—but they had not the grace or courage to kneel down and commend their brother to the mercy and goodness of God. Is it uncharitable to advance that this is an indication of a serious flaw—that a pastoral spirit is lacking, that the spirit of peace and power is not in full possession? If men are not so living that they can and do pray naturally, are they likely in their public address to come up to Bunyan's man, thus described: "He stood as if he pleaded with men."

To put the matter in another way, I would venture the opinion that we clergy are not on fire for souls. We do a great deal of work; we are as busy as we can be, especially in town parishes, but can it honestly be claimed that we go forth day by day with our hearts eagerly set upon our chief business of making God known and of winning men unto Him? Have we any such strong passion? Does it determine and colour all our relations with others—and all our conversation, in public and in private? Is it not essential that it should do so, if Evangelization is to be a continual success?

Now, if it be true that we are largely lacking in the pastoral spirit, I cannot help feeling that it can be traced to a weakness in our faith. We have not the convictions, we have not the vision, which make for Evangelistic fervour and devotion. We have to remember that it is a day of great credal disturbance, and many of the clauses of the Creed which our predecessors regarded as fundamental, and on which they went to work, are held very slenderly by us if held at all. Hence the poverty of our Evangelistic **ministry**.

In describing Mr. Bramwell Booth, the author of *Painted Windows* says: "At the back of everything, I am convinced, is the cold and commanding intensity of a really great fanatic. He believes as no little child believes in God and Satan, Heaven and Hell, and the eternal conflict of God and evil. He believes, too, that a man must in very truth be born again before he can inherit the Kingdom of Heaven" (p. 134). This, surely, is the explanation of the Evangelistic spirit which animates the Salvation Army, the Spirit which we all admire and respect, however widely we differ from that great body in other points; and it may be that we have not their zeal because we do not believe as they do. Apart from Bramwell Booth's faith, how can any man be a keen Evangelist? Until we clergy find out where we are and what we believe, I fail to see how we can do the work for which we were ordained. But given a simple clear faith, fostered by close contact with the Master—we cannot but be fishers of men. Both our pastoral work and our pulpit utterances will have the same high aim, and will oft-times hit the mark.

Here let me say that—for effective Evangelization—there is much need for reformation and revision in the pulpit. It is a most uncommon thing to hear anything approaching an Evangelistic sermon in a Christian pulpit. Men preach anything and everything else but the Word. Here are some of the topics dealt with of late in the Church of England: On Christmas Day, "Home Rule for Ireland"; on Easter Day, "The Genoa Conference"; on Trinity Sunday, "Courtship." Could anything be more deplorable—especially in a day when men are listening eagerly for some voice that will lead them into Light?

Permit me to submit my own view of the message which is especially called for in this great day:

(a) Preach about GOD. Like the Prophets of old, make Him a reality to your people. Bring Him near to their thoughts. Give Him shape in their minds. Show Him to the waiting vision of mankind. The proclaimed Word must centre in God, and in God as He is beheld at Calvary. To preach about man instead of God is the most self-defeating of all plans. I think St. Paul possibly felt that, when he dropped the simple message and gave a philosophic discourse in the Areopagus. The result was not cheering. As Mr. Rackham says in his commentary on the Acts: "At Athens St. Paul tried the wisdom of the world and found it wanting; and when he went on to Corinth, he determined not to try excellency of speech or the persuasive words of wisdom, but to preach—what he had not proclaimed in the Areopagus—Christ crucified. His disappointment at the failure of the former method to touch the frivolous Athenians no doubt kindled the fire with which he denounces the wisdom of the world in his first epistle to the Corinthians." When I say "Preach about God," I mean what I say. Make Him and His ways and His Will the subject; and in doing it avoid as much as possible any low motives for your appeal to the conscience and the heart. I am aware that social injustice

is perpetually blanketing the truth of Fatherhood revealed by the Cross. None the less, if we offer the Gospel to the world primarily as the cure for industrial wrongs, men will turn away, and they will indubitably be right. Nay, let preachers betray genuine and constant sympathy with our social and industrial difficulties, but have done with mercenary arguments for belief in God; let them trust the instinct that God is precious for His own sake. Let the appeal be "Get right with God." Kindle that fire, and it will burn to ashes the social apathies by which the Church has too often been disgraced. 'It is all very well to talk extravagantly about bringing in the Kingdom of God, but the only sure way to do it is to bring in the King Himself, and let Him reign. We are having too much talk about the Kingdom without any reference to the King.

(b) Preach about Jesus Christ. "Lift Him up," and in terms which mean something, which mean the right thing. It is extraordinary how necessary it is to say this, but you will find too often that Jesus Christ is referred to as a sort of kind Brother, acting a brother's part, whereas the real message is that He is to take my place—self's place—"Not I, but Christ liveth in me." Moreover, men have to be convinced that Jesus Christ is necessary for them, because, many as are the wonders of psycho-analysis and mental therapeutics, He alone can deal with buried guilt, for only He can reach to the innermost places and break the deadliest bondage that may be hiding in the secret chambers of the soul. He, and none but He, ventures into the haunted underworld, taking with Him authority, light, joy, peace. He, and none but He, can straighten out a man's relationship with God.

(c) Preach the Cross, not only as the atoning sacrifice, but also as the only way of freedom from the past, and of union with the Redeemer Himself. It is a fatal mistake to allow men to think that they can reign with Christ without suffering with Him, and is responsible for much failure. It has been well said that "there is a wide diffusion in the Church of a sort of Christian secularism, and an indifference to the heart of religion which clothes itself in the garb of religious toleration." Such a Laodicean temper should have no quarter in the Church, and preaching must be directed against it with a view to impress upon the minds of men that the difference between the Christian and the non-Christian attitude to Jesus is not a difference of more or less, or better or worse, but a difference of life and death." To put it otherwise, Evangelization can only tell when it rests on a pure unmingled element of loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ, *and* demands pure unmingled loyalty to Him as the actual foundation of the Christian life. Such loyalty must needs express itself in renunciation for the sake of Jesus Christ. Loyalty has to pay its price, and if the price be death, loyalty asks no discount. The fact is, revival is the most expensive thing, and we have no business to disguise it. If anyone thinks that revival means emotion and no sacrifice, then they will get one of the biggest surprises of their life, when their eyes are opened to the Truth. This is not teaching which any man welcomes

naturally, but there is nothing gained by withholding it, and by ignoring the sterner side of the Master's message. The Woman of Samaria heard no palliating words, and the words of grace which Mary heard as she mourned on the Resurrection morning were accompanied by words of warning; "Touch Me not," for, as a preacher recently pointed out, Our Lord did not indulge in any "cheap Bernard Shaw-like talk," but called men to die unto sin in order that they might rise again unto life, and life for evermore.

(2) Secondly. We must needs pay much attention to the large body of lapsed communicants if Evangelization is to be carried on well. For the most part they are in agreement with us, but they are not living the life nor doing the work to which they have been called, and yet they are necessary. They can reach the unevangelized as, and when, we ordained men cannot. They can exercise an influence in many ways and in many directions and quarters from which we are precluded. It would be unfortunate to try and proceed without them. It is worth a great deal to recover them—and to bring them into the fighting line. A wise man, I think, will set about this by a great deal of prayer, and a great deal of careful teaching, more particularly by helping them understand the Bible and its message. It would be an enormous gain if men would devote themselves to such an exposition of the Bible that their hearers would almost feel themselves forced to read it themselves. There is little doubt that the Church is more or less impotent to-day because faith is weak, and convictions are not deep, and this can largely be traced to an ignorance of what God thinks and wants as revealed to us in Holy Writ. If, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, preachers and teachers would open men's understanding that they shall understand the Scriptures, we should certainly have a revived and revived Church which is surely the obvious precursor to a revived world. I do not suggest, far from it, that we should trouble people with the various theories of inspiration, but, taking Scripture as the plain word of God, that its meaning should be so studied and brought out that men and women find themselves unable to resist its appeal, and humbly surrender themselves to the service of Him Whose Voice in Holy Writ is unmistakable. Another practical method of influencing this class seems to be by means of a parochial convention for about a week, having as its object the rousing of the ordinary congregation: (a) To the sense of a need of a mission. (b) To recognize their responsibility in the matter.

(3) Thirdly: There can be no satisfactory Evangelization unless we attend to the atmosphere and the soil. The Parable of the Sower is very explicit on this point, which is, alas! a too timely one.

(a) With regard to the atmosphere, I have in mind the difficulties of secularism, the parochial dance, the whist drive, which at their best may raise much money, but which cannot be called spiritually elevating, and are not wholly congenial to the operation

of the Holy Ghost on Whom we depend for results. It will be enough for me to quote from a letter of a dear brother written last January: "Parochial work just now is extraordinarily interesting but very difficult. Last week we had our Girls' Club Social, and actually I find some of the girls playing a game of kissing the young men—and this in a parish which has had generations of spiritual teaching." Comment is needless; for few, if any, would claim that such a condition of things makes for fruitful Evangelization.

(b) With regard to the soil. Too often it is ignored—and the seed, good in itself and well sown, cannot strike a root. It is never wise to overlook the state of heart and mind of the hearers as if it were immaterial. No good husbandman does so. And that is surely the explanation of the words employed by Jeremiah in his call to repentance, when he exclaims, "Break up the fallow ground"—words which prove the conviction that beneath the shallow barren surface of the national life there was soil capable of receiving good seed and of bringing forth fruit meet for repentance. I would wish here to raise my voice in support of the plea for a restoration of religion to our English home life, for I cannot see much hope for any man's ministry unless the soil is prepared, and mainly prepared, at the home fireside. On the whole, the Church of Christ is more indebted for her successes to pious parents than to pious pastors. Let me support this statement by quoting the language employed recently by a leading journal about the late Sir Alfred Pearce Gould. "He was born and nurtured in a Christian home. He was a son of the manse, and the influence of that home moulded him and made him. To his last hour he held in lowly reverence the memory of that pious pair to whom he owed body and soul. At a time when the old-fashioned Christian household is passing away, being replaced by an establishment in which neither prayer nor praise resounds, it is pertinent to ask whether the youth, to-day soul-starved and pagan, will yield to-morrow a sterling manhood capable of meeting the stern demands of a rapidly changing world? I do not believe it is possible. Out of the rags and ribbons of a frivolous age we cannot weave the glories of a worthy humanity. Christian homes have begotten the great men of the past; to similar homes we must turn for the great men of the future." Few men can be great Evangelists only by faithful preaching; they must also be faithful pastors, consistent and earnest in their visiting, getting into the homes of the people, and making them more or less independent establishments for the cultivation of a divine harvest. A happy and simple way of beginning this is by personally starting family prayers in homes; and by showing some of the family how to carry them on regularly, recommending the Scripture Union or some such portion of Scripture, and the weekly collect or the excellent Mothers' Union prayer.

My closing word may be the most important and the most needed. It somewhat summarizes what I have been trying to say, and it is virtually an appeal.

(i.) To get our minds clearly fixed on this work ; not to be over-occupied with other interests, such as Church politics and the doings of the National Assembly, and the wonderful potentialities of Reunion, topics which have a real claim to our limited attention, but we must see that it is limited, for, as I think the Archbishop of York said some time ago : " Nothing matters but Evangelization."

(ii.) To give our hearts to the work, and to let them be so engaged with it and in it that it is, as it were, " our meat and our drink " (St. John iv.) to do it and to have it done. Perhaps the saddest feature of the whole situation of to-day is that we can look upon our fellow-men and not really care whether they live or die. Until that is corrected, there will not be any Evangelization worthy of the name.

How mysterious it is that we can think of the Holy Spirit dwelling within us, and yet be conscious of having no fire ! Verily we need to seek, in patience and faith, a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit, whatever it means, whatever it costs. Otherwise, Christ cannot work through us nor we effectually for Him. But given a new heart and a fresh flame, we shall exclaim to ourselves in a new way, " Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel, if I do not win souls " ; and we shall think out and devise many means and methods of doing it ; it will be the uppermost thought in our dreams day and night ; we shall say, " I must work the work of Him Who has ordained me whilst it is called the day."

Many of you can match this example of what I mean. A young woman recently came forward for confirmation and is living a faithful Christian life. Not many months ago she was sitting in darkness, and simply did not care about, or seem to understand any of God's Truths. But a kind lady, who is always out for others, approached her, made friends with her, talked quietly to her, lent her books and discussed them with her, and then began to pray with her until her eyes were opened and she came to Jesus.

The personal touch is the touch of power. Thereby the Spirit is wont to work ; for most souls are brought to Christ by some other soul that cares.

If we but cared more, and went to our work daily with a truly strong pastoral spirit, with a definite aim and desire, our labours and our prayers would not be in vain ; God would turn to Himself such as should be saved.

