

Our Contributors

The Christianity of Christ and that of Modern Days.

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I trust the term pessimist will not be applicable to me if I say at the outset that the Christianity of to-day is radically different from the Christianity of Christ—that we are getting away from the apostolic method and spirit in our church work and life—that we are going to Dan and Beersheba without tarrying at Jerusalem. In saying this we do not close our eyes to the fact that there is a great deal in the present day to fill the heart with joy and gladness. Never was there greater liberality shown on the part of the people to spread the Gospel than to-day. Never as much enthusiasm manifested in works of charity perhaps never more philanthropic work done, all of which call loudly for praise and should stimulate us to greater earnestness and activity, yet the methods adopted in many departments call for examination.

A study of church returns reveals the fact that most of the additions to the church membership are from the church community and not from the unbelieving world. In the seventh century the preachers never waited for the audience to come to them; they went to the audience—they preached everywhere and on every day of the week, wherever people were found they had a message and wherever they found a human soul there they delivered it. It is true they met in synagogues, but these synagogues were households of faith, places where Christians met for fellowship and spiritual uplifting. It was not expected that sinners would come to these places to be converted; but would come inside after being handpicked from the world outside.

Now we build big churches and expect the world to crowd inside of them to be led to Christ. The result is, many do—but many do not; and we content our selves by saying the church is there and they know when the services are held, so it is their own lookout not ours. Perhaps it is ours more than we make it.

In the seventh century the highways and hedges were searched and men were entreated to come. Now we keep very close to the asphalt pavement and brown stone fronts. It might be of interest to note that the greatest revival since the Reformation was brought about by men going everywhere preaching the Word and singing it too; and thousands who would not enter the churches heard the Word and it was to them the power of God unto salvation.

Are sufficient efforts being made by us to reach those

Outside the Pale of the Christian Church?

A goodly number of Y. M. C. A.'s and kindred Institutions have fallen short of their own ideal, and the churches as well and to a large extent have become religi us clubs for young men.

There is an ever widening gulf being found in the church between the rich and poor especially in cities—we are reading from time to time of the up town and down town churches. The up town are flourishing, while the down town are going down, and for the poor it is considered a mission hall is good

enough and an unexperienced man who can be secured at less cost is plenty good enough to minister to them.

One cannot help but ask what is the cause of this state of affairs, and for answer we may hear as we have heard—few rents too high; fees in Y. M. C. A. too high, only those in well to do circumstances can join; too much machinery to keep going, causing too much expense; the buildings too grand, etc. These may all be causes, and each may have some weight; yet is there not something else underlying these? Something deeper than any or all of these? Is not that cause this? The Christianity of modern days is more of a creed than a life, more of a form than a reality, more of a system of doing than of being. In the Master's time there was a separation between the Church and the world. Now one would require a microscope to see it. Then the world luxuriated and the Christians possessed nothing for themselves but all things for Christ. Now Christians luxuriate on beds of ease and the heathen world wallows in poverty. Then the home was the Church and the school in which religious principles were woven into the texture of the child's life. Now, the children, for the most part, receive their spiritual training at the hands of Sabbath School Teachers; while the home has become to many simply a place to eat and sleep in.

Perhaps we may institute a better comparison by considering the prevailing characteristics of the Christianity of Christ.

Earnestness.

Was not the Master in earnest about all his work? What a passion for souls was His! Was there ever a moment when he did not feel the pressure of His work upon Him? Is it not the lack of earnestness? If golden sheaves are to be garnered for God there must be going forth and weeping.

Are we ministers sufficiently in earnest? Do we not think too much of our own comfort and ease? Did it not mean much to the Disciples of Jesus to go everywhere preaching the Gospel? Now to be minister means to have a passport into the best society, and to visit a home often causes the death of the best chicken on the roost. Besides, looking at it from the world's standpoint, where are the best men found to day? In places where the least needed in congregations where there is sufficient ability and grace to keep the organization going minus the minister; while the inferior men (from the world's view) are in front of the battle, in the midst of temptations and vice, holding the fortress against the world, the flesh and the devil.

In what direction does hope lie? Dr. Stalker says in this:

"It seems to me there can be no more important factor in the solution of the problem than the kind of men who fill the office of the ministry. We must have men of more power, more concentration on the aims of the ministry, more wisdom, but above all more willingness to sacrifice their lives to their vocation. We have too tame and conventional a way of thinking about our career. Men are not even ambitious of doing more than settling in a comfortable position and getting through its duties in a respectable way. We need to have men penetrated with the problem as a whole and labouring with the new developments which the

times require. The prizes of the ministry ought to be the posts of greatest difficulty. When a student or young minister proves to have the genuine gift, his natural goal should not be a highly paid place in a West End Church, but a position where he would be in the forefront of the battle with sin and shame."

To wealth Christ paid no deference. His congregations were composed chiefly of the common people. His special friends and companions were chosen from among them. The rich who fared sumptuously every day, oblivious of the poverty around them, Christ portrayed as in another life suffering torments. The shrewd and crafty capitalist whose only notion of prosperity was accumulation and still accumulation was called a fool. Nor did He pay any more attention to the aristocracy in the church than He did to the aristocracy of wealth in society.

But an earnest ministry would not provide a complete remedy, as is evidenced by looking at some Old Testament preachers and the results. There must be earnestness on the part of the people who name the name of Christ, such communion with the Lord that will lead the world to say "These people have been with Christ." We hope and pray that the day will soon come when the kingdom of love will be established, and we must not forget that love is vicarious; that it seeks not its own things but the things of others. When Christians become really earnest about the salvation of souls; when they really *want* the outside world to be gathered into the Church; when they are as anxiously sought after for the Lord as voters are at the time of an election—then all our churches will be full and larger ones will be necessary to accommodate the ever increasing throng; then the Christianity of to-day will possess one of the excellencies of the Christianity of Christ.

Another characteristic of the Christianity of Christ was its

Liberality

The creed was very concise. "Repent and be baptized." With all our liberality so called there is a great deal of narrowness. We have our confession of Faith, prayer books, immersion and penitent benches, and we lay more stress on these than would appear on the outside. Suppose we announced a meeting when the best methods of overtaking personal work for Christ would be discussed, would we have a corporal's guard present? What a gathering there would be if the object of the meeting were to make some alteration in the form of worship, say to kneel at prayer instead of bowing the head and keeping eyes open; while one would be a non-essential and the other the all important. What controversy there has been over the "true church", "Historic Episcopate", "Apostolic Succession." If half the energy were spent in saving souls, more glory would come to the Lord, and we would show a great deal more of the true church than we do. There would then be apostolic succession in the matter—the all important matter of saving souls.

Another characteristic of the Christianity of Christ was

Self Sacrifice

The Christianity of Christ was one of self sacrifice, whether we consider the founder, the mode of its operation, or the spirit of its teaching. The cross was a