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On the Art of Soul-Winning.

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SOUL-WINNING is a divine art. The schools for mental culture cannot impart this spiritual accomplishment; it can be learned only in the school of the Holy Spirit by that oldest and greatest of teachers—Experience.

No purely human philosophy ever valued the soul aright, nor devised a sufficient remedy for its recovery from sin, and its renewal unto holiness. Divine revelation gives the highest conception of the soul's value, and divine wisdom alone can impart skill in winning men from hell to heaven. "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he that winneth souls is wise." In this proverb is found a logical and vital connection between the fruit of the righteous and the work of soul-winning. The righteous—those who are in Christ as the branch is in the vine—will necessarily bear this precious fruit. If the Christ-life be in us, it will become manifest in fruit according to its nature. Christ Jesus came into the world for a like purpose. As the Father sent the Son, so has the Son sent his disciples. And the commission to the Church to disciple all nations has never been repealed. The obligation to fulfil this law of love is still operative. The command has both a local and universal application. One is: Go out into the streets, lanes, and highways, and compel them to come in. The other is: Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

In the presentation of this subject, Winning Souls, I would first deal with motives. Methods will in a great measure take care of themselves. If this master passion possesses us we shall readily acquire such methods as recurring occasions demand. Individual souls require independent treatment. In physical life the specific remedy successful with a certain disease in one patient may prove valueless for the same disease in another patient. In the spiritual realm there is but one remedy for every diseased soul; but in treatment there must needs be variety of method. Our Lord followed no fixed rules. He adopted no inflexible system of homiletics. The adaptation of his sermons to the needs of each case is worthy of careful study. He healed one blind man with clay and spittle; he healed another by commanding the light to shine into darkness. On one occasion he lifted the sufferer by the hand; yet again he healed another by imparting power through the fringe of his garment. His sermon to Nicodemus condemneth the flesh-nature as utterly worthless, and emphasized the need of a radical second birth. In his conversation with the Samaritan woman he condemned the sins of the flesh. The one he hid look and he saved; the other, drink and he satisfied. Jesus preached righteousness to Simon, the Pharisee, but grace to the weeping penitent. He told the parents of the child raised from the dead to give her food; he commanded the friends of Lazarus to loose him and let him go. Thus did our Lord minister to the bodies and souls of the people in divers ways. He was neither hampered by tradition, nor hindered by custom. And his work was neither fanatical in tendency, nor lawless in purpose.

The special persistent aim of consecrated Christianity should be that of winning souls. Not indeed seeking to save the soul as a distinct entity, but rather to save the entire personality. Soul salvation necessarily includes bodily-salvation, but there is a physical salvation which leaves the soul groveling in its sinful state. There are schemes of reform which deal with man outwardly. To this *per se* we make no objection. But the gospel of Christ takes hold on the inner life and elevates the entire being. It penetrates to the interior spirit, and thereby renews the whole man. This divine remedy, brought to light through the gospel, saves the sinner from sin's penalty and power. For sin ramifies every department of our nature, physical and moral, per-

verting the will, corrupting the affections, searing the conscience, infecting the soul. So grace announces pardon, leads to purity, assures victory elevates and ennobles, gives promise to final redemption from sin's dire curse in complete restoration by a resurrection from the dead.

This then is the delightful and inspiring task given to every Christian believer—namely, that of winning sinners to our Lord Jesus Christ. Winning the child from evil to good; winning the ignorant to wisdom's ways; winning the heedless from Satan's snares; winning the lost to paths of virtue; winning all from the bondage of the devil to the liberty wherewith Christ makes free. Not to angels is this royal service given. Swiftly would they fly on so privileged an errand. Yet, alas, how slowly we move in this distinguished work: how leaden are our heels, how insensible our hearts, how insipid our speech, how repellent our cold approaches to the needy soul, so that our words become as idle tales, and our pretensions become an empty meaning to those whose hunger leads them to expect living bread, where they find naught but dead chaff. As those that must give account, may we watch every opportunity to win sinners to the Lord Jesus, and hereafter have golden sheaves to lay at the Master's feet.

Looking Like a Minister.

THE effect of ministerial dress and manner is very different on persons of contrary temperaments. There are those with anti-clerical bias who prefer the minister that looks like a man of the world, and is not differentiated by the cut of his coat or the tone of sanctity in his voice. It is supposed that the non-church going classes are predisposed to believe in the man who eschews the phylacterics of his profession and adopts the manners of the world. The anti-priestly instinct is strong in many people, and a Tweed suit and colored scarf are passports to their confidence. They like a minister when he does not look like one. A feeling exactly opposite to this sways another class, perhaps a larger class. They like the air of sanctity. They like the cast of countenance which suggests something more heavenly than the shops and street, and intonations that are subdued and mellowed by communion with the unseen world. It cannot be doubted that in all races there is something which yields to the spell of a priestly man. We remember two ministers living in the same town of contrary habits and appearances. The one wore a coat of superfine broadcloth, which hung straight from his neck to the calves of his legs. He maintained a gravity and dignity which checked the laughter of the boys in the street and made the week-day to be as a Sabbath. When he passed by a sacred hush crept over all who saw him. The other was perhaps as good a man as he, so far as the essentials of a good life were concerned. He carried his head aloft, wore a morning coat, carried a fine silver-headed cane and when he took his daily exercise he was followed by a splendid Saint Bernard dog. But it must be admitted that his influence in the town was a hundred fold less than the other, and though every one respected his integrity, religion and culture, there was no such influence issuing from his life as from the one who dressed, walked, spoke and looked like a minister of the gospel. We suppose there is no law binding on us in these matters, and a certain freedom must be allowed to divergent tastes and opinions. One the one hand we should avoid giving offence to those who hate sanctimoniousness more than they hate irreligion, and on the other we should consider those who think that ministers should avoid resemblance to the world in dress and manner. We are required to put a restraint on our independence and assertion of rights for the sake of others. For instance, we are not of those who think hilarity is a sign of an unregenerate nature, but ministerial hilarity in public places where

unbelievers and scoffers congregate, may lower our profession in the eyes of men. To burn the weed may be a warrantable pleasure, but to walk the crowded street with pipe or cigar in the mouth like the bowsprit of a ship often awakens aversion and disparagement of the ministry. It is necessary for ministers, in fact, for Christians generally, to study those things which lift up their calling in the eyes of the world and to ally every prejudice that exists against our Christian faith.

Religious Worship.

THE principle of religious worship in the human heart is one that is universally recognized. Whatever men are found, there in some form or other, a shrine is builded. If there are any exceptions to this, they are so insignificant as to make the rule more noteworthy. As men advance in civilization, however, worship seems to decline on the part of some. When Greece and Rome reached their highest point of development, there were in both those who discarded the forms of public worship. It is so, to a certain extent, in the nations most advanced in civilization to-day. In the most highly civilized centres of the world, there are many, especially among men who enter no church and bow the knee in no form of prayer or praise. In a recent number of the Outlook, attention is called to this fact, and the need of worship for all, for men as well as for women, is asserted and emphasized.

Various causes for this decline of the spirit of worship on the part of many are assigned. They find other, and more profitable means, it is said, to employ their time; they are too wearied with the efforts of the week's work to make the necessary exertion to prepare for public worship; the services themselves are not interesting; the sermon is dull and the music lacks inspiration; in a word the church and worship have no attractions for these, and hence they do not resort to them. Of course, it is easy to exaggerate the lack of the worshipful spirit in our various communities. But that it is lacking to an extent that one must exceedingly regret, is patent to all. Some of our churches are well filled, but there are many of them in which the accommodations far surpass the demand. In some communities, church accommodations are adequate only to a fraction of the population, but these as a whole seem more than sufficient for the demands that are made upon them.

It is difficult to prescribe a remedy, or even to suggest one for this defect which so many recognize. One thing, it seems to the writer of these lines, would be immensely helpful. Let the services be worshipful from beginning to end. Whatever addition, whatever elimination, whatever innovation is needed to bring this about, let there be no hesitation to adopt. We recognize, the importance of the pulpit. The written word can never take the place of the spoken word, and yet the pulpit should lend itself in all possible ways to this idea of worship. It should not be a place for the inculcation of information, simply. It should not be regarded merely as a vantage-ground for exhortation. Most of all, it should not be looked upon as that which is to furnish amusement. The pulpit is in our public services to lead the worship of the congregation. It is to emphasize in all possible ways the needs of the spiritual life, and the essentialness of spiritual culture. It is to give the upward look to the congregation, and to impress upon those coming within its influence the absolute necessity of worship. The obtaining of this in our congregations, would, we believe, be of vast help. It is to be found in many; it ought to be found in all. But after all that may be done in this way, the remedy for the lack of worship is the impartation of the worshipful heart. When the spirit is renewed within the man, then will he bow in adoration and praise. Then, and probably not till then, will he say with the author of the pilgrim psalm, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."