

Current Topics and Events.

EVANGELISM.

This is in all ages the great duty of the Church—to preach the glad evangel, the “good news” of the Gospel. Never is the Church so successful, never does it so fulfil its mission as when engaged in aggressive soul-saving work. If ever it become so conservative, so dignified, that it is out of sympathy with active evangelism, then “Ichabod” is written upon it; it is dying of respectability. It is the special glory of Methodism that it is an evangelistic Church. Revival is its vital air. It reaches its true ideal when it is a continual revival. To this end all things else—fine churches, tuneful choirs, eloquent preaching—are but means. To regard them as anything else would be to glorify an engine that, however polished and beautiful, could do no work. Methodism in its most glorious days was a revival flame, that swept the land and kindled men’s souls with a fire of zeal, and melted all hearts with its heavenly glow.

One element in the success of Methodism has been the flexibility of its mode of operation, its power of adaptation to varying circumstances. This enables it to adapt its ministrations, without losing its fervour, to the cultured and wealthy city congregation, to the frontier hamlet, to the fishing village, the mining camp, the Indian mission, or the squalid purlieu of poverty. From its social sympathies, the warmth of its affections, the amount of *heart* it manifests, it is especially adapted to the lowly and the poor. Among them its most signal triumphs were achieved and many of its noblest trophies won. It is to be feared that to some degree it has lost the hold that it once had upon this class. In the great cities it has developed a highly organized Church life, and has attracted many of the refined and wealthy classes. Whether rightly

or wrongly, the idea is sometimes entertained among the poor that they are not as welcome in our elegant modern churches as they were in the quaint, old-fashioned, homely meeting-houses of an earlier day. It is the duty of the rich to disabuse their poorer neighbours of this idea by a warmth of cordiality that shall convince them that in the house of God the rich and poor meet together and realize that the Lord is the maker of them all.

But more than this we deem is necessary. The Church, as in the earlier days, should go out into the highways and compel, with a kindly Christian compulsion, the unchurched masses to come to the house of God. It should go to neglected neighbourhoods and establish cottage prayer-meetings, and open mission halls, and plant Sunday-schools, and, if need be, sing the Gospel through the streets, as with signal success it has often done in the past. Under the guidance of the zealous evangelist, the Rev. Price Hughes, English Methodism is organizing for this very work amid the unchurched thousands and tens of thousands of the crowded city of London, and with most encouraging and marvellous success.

Is there not room for a grand aggressive movement of this sort on this side of the sea? Is Methodism in New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Montreal, Toronto, reaching the masses, and moulding their life as it might? This is a work in which the lay talent of the Church might find profitable scope for its energies and employment for its zeal. Half the people in our churches are suffering for want of something to do. Their Christian life is a mere passive and receptive one, instead of being an active and energetic one. It would give wonderful vigour and vivacity to our Church life if every member had something definite to