

strength upon intellectual accuracy is no more to be respected than the Pharisaism which for a pretense made long prayers. Our great danger is not from either the "higher critics" or the conservative critics, but from the failure of both to testify against society-gilded iniquity which, through the form of "harmless" or doubtful amusements creep into our churches. For what value will a vindicated Bible be to a church that does not respect its teachings, and what signifies the form of an apostolic church, whose power has been sapped by the spirit of the world.—*Christian Standard*.

### A WORKING THEOLOGY

The *Pacific*, a congregational journal, commenting upon the remarkable growth of the churches of Christ in America in comparison with certain leading evangelical bodies, says: "It may be well for other denominational bodies to enquire: Why this remarkable growth among the Disciples of Christ? Does some one say, 'It is so easy to get into the Disciple churches?' 'We have heard that before. But is it any easier than it was to get into the church in its apostolic days?' They require always, 'repentance toward God, faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ,' and that was what Paul preached to Jew and Greek. They call on people to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins, and that was what Peter did. There are some of the doctrines of the Disciple Church which it is impossible for us to accept. But one thing we have always admired, viz: the definiteness in their preaching. People who hear their preachers know exactly what is expected of them. . . . And it is the almost universal custom of their minister to give a gospel invitation at the close of every sermon. We do not say that this invitation from the pulpit is necessary, but we do assert that where it is not given in some form many souls are not brought to a confession of Christ unless the minister is one who does considerable personal work during the week. We give these figures and throw out these hints, believing that there is in them a valuable lesson."

The whole article of our western neighbor is notable for an insight with respect to the success of the churches of Christ in the present generation and for its recognition of the scriptural basis of the issue they make with the world, not common to find in denominational journals. On its own merits the extract quoted is valuable as something of a pioneer in a field of investigation which may come to be a subject of study by leaders of denominational forces. No wise and wide-awake leader of religious thought and life can afford to be indifferent to the principles and methods of the successful evangelism and church building which *The Pacific* so pertinently comments on.

But the quotation is here made to call attention to something back of the conditions which it emphasizes and commends. Theology lies back of ecclesiology and evangelism, and it is the theology of these disciples of Christ or Christians which is the true secret of their success. In general terms may be termed, in an eminent sense, a working theology. They have no philosophy of religion which can not be translated into common speech, and which cannot be used in the revival or the inquiry room. Discarding scholastic terminology entirely and pressing home gospel truth in the very words of the Scripture and especially of the New Testament, they are always understood while their preaching springing so directly from the in-

spired record carries with it the force of divine authority.

A comparison will be helpful here. Those who are simply Disciples of Christ indoctrinate their converts as they are being won. Every doctrinal position held by these disciples will be preached in a protracted meeting. Any doctrine is considered valueless unless it can be used as a motive to persuade sinners. On the other hand, fancy the hard logic of Calvinism, or the subtleties of inconsistent Arminianism in modern revival meeting! The fact that Presbyterian, Baptists, and Methodists can unite without friction or sacrifice in a union meeting, shows that the peculiar views of each body form no part of its evangelistic theology. So, after converts are won, they are to be indoctrinated, it trained at all, in the denominational beliefs. With the disciples of Christ, to become a Christian is to become a member of the church. No examination is required for church membership other than the simple confession of Christ made by the penitent sinner. Baptism is not an afterthought—an appendage of some "branch" of the kingdom. In being baptized into Christ, believers are baptized into his church. In the denominational plan there is immense waste of energy used in persuading converts to "join the church;" besides, the persuading is often unsuccessful.

The fundamental principles of these disciples of Christ enable them to concentrate the whole force of their preaching upon convincing and persuading the unconverted. They hold that God is always willing to save sinners, that Christ is ever present with his word, that the Holy Spirit is an abiding presence with the church, that unconverted men have ability to believe divine testimony, that the gospel is a revelation to be understood by even the simplest minds, that men are in danger of eternal loss and anguish if they refuse to accept Christ, and that the moment they obey the gospel from the heart, they have the divine assurance of the forgiveness of their sins and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to reinforce their new-born faith and help their infirmities.

In these elementary doctrinal beliefs is to found the explanation of the evangelistic methods and success of the disciples of Christ pleading for a return to New Testament Christianity. They pray to God for strength of mind and heart to press home gospel truth upon the conscience of the sinner and for open doors of opportunity to deliver their message. They present facts and not theories; Christ and not philosophy; a divine power, and not a system of opinions. They reject both a mechanical and a transcendental gospel, and preach the word with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. With the conviction that at every moment of their ministry they have all heavenly forces on their side in their effort to rescue the lost, that the message of mercy is exactly suited to the needs of fallen men, and that at any time sinners may turn from their sins and live, it is no wonder that the settled habit of these disciples is to extend the gracious invitation of Christ at every public service, and that the success of their evangelical and evangelistic vocation is coming to be worthy of study and comment by the whole Christian world.—*Christian Standard*.

The Foreign Society propose to open work in Cuba. At least two men should be sent to that field without delay. The work in Cuba should be self-supporting in a few years.

### RUTH AND NEB.

Neb is usually a model of good behavior, but on one occasion at least his mistress was dreadfully ashamed of him.

Ruth came to see us. Now Ruth is a dear, kind-hearted child, and nothing would induce her to hurt a helpless creature. She is very fond of cats, and has one of her own, which loves her in return. When she saw Neb, she said: "Oh! what a nice kitty. May I catch him and pet him awhile?"

"Yes, dear," said Miss Margaret.

Neb heard the request and the answer. He holds children at a very low estimate; he looked at the pretty little lady approaching him, and declared that he didn't wish to be potted. Just as she reached him, he arose and walked away in a dignified manner. Ruth ran after him, and Neb disappeared under the barn.

"Never mind, dearie," said Miss Margaret, "I know how you can catch him."

So at dinner time when Neb can in, gracefully waving his tail and purring loudly. Miss Margaret gave Ruth his saucer of milk.

"Come, kitty, kitty," called Ruth, and Neb followed her.

All the time he was eating, Ruth potted him gently, and after dinner was over he was quite willing to have her hold him. She came into the library in triumph, saying, "Just see, Miss Margaret, he lets me carry him, and he sits on my lap, and doesn't try to run away."

"Silly old Neb," said Miss Margaret. "Didn't you know Ruth loved kitties, and wouldn't hurt you?"

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