

THE WESLEYAN

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SATURDAY, AUGUST 11, 1877.

THE EVANGELIST MOVEMENT—PRO AND CON.

Within ten—or, at most, twenty—years, the Christian world has witnessed, in the evangelist system, one of the most remarkable phenomena in the history of Christianity. There are men in but the medium of life who can recollect the first signs of what was considered, at that early period, a strange, by some a dangerous, movement. A solitary individual, urged by strong impulse, singled himself out from among Christians of his class; went into the world, and lived by hard evangelistic work, relying upon God alone for support. Something of the kind had been witnessed before, but under very different regulations. The apostles did this by commission direct. The Jesuits and Mormons had done it for their respective societies. John Wesley and his colleagues began as evangelists, and ended by incorporating the advantages of the evangelist and itinerant life into the religious system which grew under their labours. But the world recently saw, for the first time, men setting themselves apart—we use the expression in no uncharitable sense—for the benefit of mankind. Without ordination in some instances; leaving their particular church nomenclature behind them; having no settled plans; often no settled income,—they launched upon the evangelistic sea and floated with the current of providence.

What has been gained? Very much. We are thankful thus far—though not a little anxious. The churches have been taught some valuable lessons.

Our privileges under grace, under a dispensation of the Holy Ghost, have come forcibly to our observation. Assembling in multitudes with great expectations, results have been correspondingly achieved. We had formed regular habits of devout church-going, which involved little more than down-sitting and uprising; the moment we began to honour God by looking for conversions, God honoured us by giving them. The evangelists have taught us how to enter upon religious work with an aim, a hope and an advantage.

The churches have learned something of the divine liberality, too, through these agencies. There are methods of good, means of conversion and sanctification, other than the strictly conventional ones of each peculiar sect. God will work by men of any name, or without any name—ordained or unordained—who have a high aim and a holy life. The Millennium is not to come through the vestry-doors of any one church, more than by the energies and faith of the universal brotherhood of saints. The evangelists have helped to break down barriers and dispense with shibboleths.

We are all gratified for the impetus given through this movement to Christian union. Union had begun before the evangelist system came much into notice; but the system has materially strengthened the bonds of fraternity. The tendency of Christianity was toward disintegration, while sects multiplied, and denominational lines were drawn deeper, as the ages advanced. If Christians can be brought to reverence their own places of spiritual birth, and to lovingly guard, as a first, sacred trust, the home of their childhood and their children, at the same time reaching out a helping hand to every deserving cause about them, Christian character will assume glorious proportions before the eyes of observers. This we are, seemingly, attaining unto; and the aid of Evangelists in this advantage should be acknowledged.

How to use the Bible has been one of the practical lessons taught by Evangelists. It may be recorded as a positive fact

—the result of some observation in the book-business—that students' Bibles have very largely increased in sales within a year or two, and to all appearance this is but the beginning of a tide in the right direction. Solo-singing has also come into use by the same agency, as a most touching mode of presenting truth. In fact, an old watchword in Methodism—"The Bible and the Hymn-book"—has been caught up in these days and its spirit fairly acted upon.

The Evangelists have introduced among certain denominations excellent modes and facilities for Christian work which these would have been slow to admit by ordinary process. For the advantages of special services, Hymn-singing, enquiry meetings; the obligation of Christians to expect immediate good, and of penitents to expect immediate conversion—one or two of the churches have contended long and faithfully. They have now the satisfaction of seeing accepted by the agency of others what they advocated amid no little opposition.

Thus far the Church and the world have gained by the Evangelist movement.

But it has been the unvarying experience of all who were in sympathy with Christ's cause, that agencies not strictly ecclesiastical, which began well and grew rapidly into influential proportions, have been in danger of being abused and their strength turned against the cause to which they owed their existence. This danger seems now in part to confront the churches by new conditions arising within the Evangelist movement. We can only indicate briefly certain difficulties which present themselves dimly in the correspondence and other writings of the press.

That too many are finding it convenient to leave a regular for an irregular ministry—that the Evangelist system seems to shape toward a distinct, independent organization, which may hamper the action of the churches—that agents of doubtful character are winning way to public confidence under the broad name of Evangelists—that the churches are being educated to place too much dependence on Evangelists and too little in regular church ordinances—that questionable doctrines are coming into prominence through Evangelist teaching, especially through some of their Hymns—these are some of the warnings uttered through the Press. We can form but a very imperfect judgment ourselves, as our opportunities of observation are limited. Besides, we have seen much good, and no harm, thus far, in the movement.

RITUALISM BECOMES MORE BOLD AND DEFIANT.

These are dark days for the Church of England. A noble army within that venerable Church are making determined opposition against the dread tide which has set in against them; but without success. Vicars and Rectors of fixed Evangelical principles in England are, here and there, defied on their own ground, by men claiming all Episcopal rights, yet desperately set upon reversing the Reformation work of three centuries. One of the latest and saddest instances we have noticed was in Portsmouth, England. A Mr. Shutte entered an old parish known as of "low church" principles. He erected a new Church, and began in the subtle way so common with his class of introducing first one and then another innovation. The reverend gentleman's religious character is thus described:—

"Mr. Shutte has gone so far towards 'Rome' that if he were suddenly to skip over the narrow strip of intervening territory, it would take ordinary people some time to find it out. He believes in prayers for the dead, in 'Seven Sacraments,' in the Intercession of the Saints, in the Real Presence in the sacramental elements, and in Confession and priestly absolution. His name does not occur in the recent list of members of 'The Society of the Holy Cross,' though this may have been simply an oversight. Many clergymen are members whose names are not in the list, and at any rate if Mr. Shutte is not one of the pious brotherhood it can scarcely be from entertaining any delicate scruples on the subject."

Several memorialists in the parish thus invaded, approached the Bishop of Winchester. They charged Mr. Shutte with breaking the law of the church of England on seven points, as here set forth:—

The Rev. Reginald N. Shutte, who officiated in the said church, did, on Easter Sunday, 1877, break the law of the Church of England in the following points, as testified by the letter appended to this Memorial:—

- 1. In the use of the mixed chalice.
2. In the prostration of the celebrant before the consecrated elements.
3. In standing with his back to the congregation during the greater part of the service.
4. In wearing a cream-coloured stole, with Passion or other flowers worked upon it.
5. In making the Sign of the Cross at the Creed.
6. In elevating the efferatory alms on reception, and removing them from the Holy Table.
7. In allowing a cross on a ledge, a little above the Holy Table.

The Rev. Reginald N. Shutte delivered an address in the parish church of Ringwood on Wednesday evening, February 6th, 1877. The substance of this address has been printed in the *Christ Church Times* (special edition) of Saturday, March 3rd, wherein the following words occur:—"Come boldly, then, to the healthy exercise of Confession, though it pain you like laying bare a cancer for the surgeon's knife. . . . After you have boldly come forward, you feel the rest and quiet in your own conscience, and you will only feel thankful to have taken the step and made a clean breast of it. . . . He advised all to clear away the old dirt of sin by confession. . . . When our blessed Lord uttered those words: 'Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained,' he meant them for all who should come in the Apostolic succession; and we, who are ordained Priests of God, have this power conferred on us. When my Bishop read those words from this book (the Prayer Book) over me, and those ordained with me, I believe we received that power (if I did not believe this, I would at once destroy this Prayer Book and tear my surplice off); and now, whenever a poor penitent comes to me, and confesses his sin, I believe that when I absolve him he rises as pure and as white as snow, as if our blessed Lord had uttered the absolution Himself. Many left their confession till their death-bed, and then sent for the priest; but he strongly advised doing it at once. Come, then, boldly to God's appointed priest, and receive this absolution, and you don't know what a tender tie will soon spring up between yourself and him; a tie more tender than exists between husband and wife even, or any other relationship."

From the Bishop's reply it became too apparent that Mr. Shutte, holding his license from this Bishop, was also secretly encouraged by him to introduce these Romish doctrines and practices. He deprecated agitation, besought the memorialists, as there were several parties in the Church, to be lenient toward each other. The offended parishioners became more firm and bold in their attitude, giving, in a second letter, several important lessons for his Lordship's consideration. This presumption seemed not quite unreasonable on the part of men who had received a Bishop's reply to parish grievances, ending with this very significant sentence:—

"I have repeatedly expressed my own sentiments, and given my episcopal judgment on the use of confession—viz.: that the burdened conscience ought always to have the opportunity of unburdening itself to a minister of God; but the compulsory or habitual confession is injurious to individuals and to the church at large. I do not know that the Church of England has expressly laid down rules on the subject, but I think my opinion expresses her general spirit, and coincides with the sentiments of her leading divines at all times."

So that, by the finding of the Bishop of Manchester, the advocates of Auricular Confession and Priestly Absolution are genuine members of the Church of England; they who oppose are not.

This "Ritualist disease" as the *Pall Mall Gazette* aptly terms it, is spreading more rapidly than is generally imagined. As a caustic writer, who is himself half an ecclesiastic, observed not long ago:—

"The Church, so far as the clergy are concerned, is slipping in one direction. It is tending with fatal speed towards a catastrophe. If fifty years could be secured for the experiment the clergy would win, but the laity have taken the alarm; the nation is getting wild and in a humour for tossing and I fear that Mother Church with her frills and furbelows and scarlet petticoats, ever growing redder and redder, will be sent flying over its shoulders some fine morning."

THE PRESS ASSOCIATION—a company of gentlemen in connection with the Press, principally of Ontario—has been in Halifax during the week. We were favoured with a pleasant call from Mr. Moir, of St. Catharines, and Mr. Wilson of the Port Hope *Guide*. These gentlemen are Methodists, as are about one third of the party. Shrewd, capable, genial men, they are, having great regard for morality and religion, while doing their full share in political work. It is cheering to find that the Press of

the western country, on which so much depends at present, is under control of this class of men. Political warfare ought to be conducted in a temperate and gentlemanly spirit; and it gives promise that this shall ensue when we find good sense and moral character in the editorial ranks.

AFTER all, neither the bad writer, the weary compositor, nor the vindictive proof-reader is always to blame for newspaper errors. There is an evil genius who presides at every printer's case and whispers in his ear the word that reverses the meaning of the sentence and makes it say precisely the opposite of what was intended. The most intelligent compositor in the world could not hit the words necessary to make the complete changes that are made in putting a piece of manuscript in type. It is easy enough to mistake a word, but to always light upon one that can take its place and exactly reverse the meaning of the writer, requires a skill that is more than human. If there are any scientific persons who can explain this thing in any other way, let them speak.

This, taken from last week's *Presbyterian Witness*, traces certain typographical errors to a source beyond the printer's devil. There would seem to be, really, a diabolical agency connected with the misconstruction of words as they emanate sometimes from the types. Only last week we corrected, in lists of names, "Bessie Lobster," into its proper spelling as in the text. The revise sheet made it "Bessie Blister." We knew a similar slip by which a good evangelist was said to have sung the well-known hymn, "Unity and Wine." Of course "Ninety and Nine" was intended. But the worst trick was that by which last week, in our columns, a good brother was represented as having returned from his "bridle-trip"—which was simply an outrageous imputation upon any gentle lady in the honeymoon of a most pacific professional life. We have been waiting for the Philistines to seize the reins of that "bridle."

N. B. And one of the Philistines has done so. A caviller—itsself always perfect—has seized the reins. There is another bridle which our cotemporary may as well put on while he is about it. He will find it in the xxxixth Psalm.

SMITH'S HISTORY OF METHODISM IN EASTERN BRITISH AMERICA progresses well towards the completion of its first volume. Next week we hope to give an extract or two which will show, to some extent, the general character of the work, as well as the great care which is being expended upon it by the author. We wonder, as the work progresses, at the remarkable extent of information which Mr. Smith has compiled, and the facility with which his readers are to be enabled to follow the progress of Methodism in the several sections of the Maritime Provinces. It will be seen that the Providence of God has been with His cause in this part of the world to as marked a degree as in renowned historic countries.

HALIFAX DISTRICT.—The superintendent of Dartmouth desires to have information from the Ministers who expect to bring Laymen to Financial District Meeting. He wishes to prepare for the accommodation of all such brethren, and it is hoped there will be several. This we suppose will apply to other Districts.

INFORMATION WANTED.—Rev. C. W. Dutcher, desires information as to a number of American "Clergymen's Daries," which were left by him in "the Book Room," of the Conference, at Fredericton. He thinks some person or persons must have taken them by mistake, as they have not been found among books brought back from Conference.

A RATHER sturdy contest is just now being waged in Ontario on the liquor question. By a new Act, any thirty-five rate-payers may demand a poll upon the rights of venders or manufacturers of strong drinks, to continue the business. As a consequence, voting is being proceeded with vigorously in many localities. Several decided victories have been gained by the friends of reform; which will have the effect of preventing the sale of liquors in the freed places till a new call is made for an election. At Toronto the hotel-keepers made a desperate effort to gain a victory. On the first day they succeeded in holding a majority; but as

the law allows a day's polling for every 400 voters, Toronto will have a long campaign, and results may be very disastrous to those now rejoicing. This lengthening of the period for voting does not seem a good feature, though we cannot judge at this distance. We hope to have great victories to report.

A FEARFUL event has happened at Simcoe, Ontario. The Poor House on the Industrial Farm was consumed by fire on Saturday evening. Though great exertions were made to save the inmates, seventeen were burned to death, and four were badly injured. The cause of the fire is unknown.

It is scarcely conceivable that a Baptist minister in these days could have leanings towards any other religious body. But if we understand certain statements in the papers, Rev. Mr. Roberts, Baptist, of Nova Scotia, has sought admission to the Presbyterian ranks. There is an outflowing as well as an inflowing tide it would seem. That is natural.

PERSONAL.—Rev. C. W. Dutcher, of Hillsboro, N.B., is laid aside with fever, his Circuit being supplied by Rev. Mr. Barendale. We hope that our beloved brother may soon be restored to his work.

Rev. W. H. Evans left by the Mail Steamer last Monday, for Bermuda. His friends on those Islands will be delighted to see him.

Rev. Howard Sprague, A.M., reports himself in this issue of the WESLEYAN. We thank him for late and pleasant news from England.

Rev. J. Bond, A.B., passed through Halifax, en route for Chataqua, to attend the International Sabbath School Convention. He represents Newfoundland in that interesting Assembly of Christian workers.

Rev. Wm. Ainley and lady, as also Rev. J. M. Fisher, with his bride, paid us a brief visit as they were proceeding to their Circuits, during the early part of this week.

Rev. R. A. Temple is, we are happy to say greatly improved in health, and is again vigorously at work. He hopes to occupy the Amherst new Parsonage this Fall.

Rev. Mr. Hale has met cordial reception at Wallace, the best evidence of which is afforded by the fact that it is resolved to see him safely housed in a new Minister's residence before the snow flies.

Rev. T. M. Albrighton has been elected to succeed the deceased Dr. Waddy in the Legal Hundred of the British Conference. Mr. Albrighton was for several years a minister in these Provinces.

The British Conference has this year a Nova Scotian as President. Dr. Pope was born in Lower Horton. There is a venerable Methodist living in Wolfville who nursed him occasionally in infancy.

REV. H. SPRAGUE'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

FIRST LETTER.

BRISTOL, ENGLAND, July 24, 1877. EDITOR OF WESLEYAN.—A few lines from me will interest, at least, those of your readers who live in St. John.

After a very pleasant voyage I landed in Liverpool on Friday last. Learning there that the Conference would meet in Bristol and that the preparatory Committees were already in session, I left on Saturday for this old and historic city. Save London, no city of the Kingdom is so famous in Methodist history or rich in Methodist associations as the city of Bristol. A series of articles on "Bristol Methodism in Wesley's day" is being published in *The Western Daily Press*, a Bristol paper.

On Sabbath morning I had the rare privilege of hearing Dr. Punshon in Victoria Chapel. He conducted the entire service, reading, as is the custom in many Wesleyan Chapels in England, the "Morning Prayers." I have often heard the prayers read, but never as he read them. They are too often read, as if every body present knew them, and the only thing important was to get through them. He read them as if he had written them to express present and pressing needs. They were fresh, they were living, they were earnest. The text was Acts 26, 16-18. The chief points were the source of ministerial authority, the scope of the ministers commission, the nature of the ministers office and work, and the range and order of the truths composing the ministers message. These points were presented with a freshness and beauty of thought, an elegance and force of language, a variety and felicity of illustration, and a power of utterance