

EVANGELISM AND SOCIAL SERVICE

Suggested by the last C campaign in B. C.

By the word "Evangelism," we mean those simple, earnest presentations of Gospel truth, of a supplementary character, that are held from time to time in many of our Churches either by the Pastor and Session, or with such suitable aid as can be procured. They must of necessity be spasmodic in their character and partake of the nature of special effort. They are designed specially to reach the unsaved. Only the saving truths of the Gospel are made prominent.—The hatefulness of sin; the necessity of repentance; the terrible danger of unbelief; the hopelessness of merely human effort; the urgent need of immediate and absolute surrender to Christ; the unspeakably tender love of Jesus, and His infinite willingness to save; the majestic claims of God and the pathos of the crucifixion, must be urged with an earnestness that springs from hearts aflame with the desire of saving men.

One danger that besets our churches is that of settling down to a comfortable routine. The currents of the Church's life are in danger of running too much toward externals, and too little toward a burning love for the person of Christ, and an intense longing for the salvation of man. We may be intellectually orthodox and yet lacking in love; and where love is lacking, all is lacking. Orthodoxy without love is but the gaunt skeleton out of which the life has fled—a cage in which no bird sings,—an empty form without the living power.

Now, evangelistic services are well adapted to arrest this tendency to routine, and fan into a livelier glow the flame of Christian love. The sun's divergent rays may fail to supply the heat which a given purpose requires;

but let these rays be collected by a powerful lens, and heat sufficient is obtained to melt the most refractory substances. So evangelistic services are the Church's burning glass. They do not generate the heat; that resides in and comes from the Sun of Righteousness, but they bring it to a focus. They help to concentrate it on human hearts; and often beneath its steady and continuous power the hardest hearts are melted into tenderness and contrition.

Inspired by a deep consciousness of the value of evangelistic services, our Committee on Social Service and Evangelism, fixed on the Fraser River Valley as a suitable field for an Evangelistic Campaign. The local Committee, mainly through the leadership of Dr. Pidgeon, held a convention at Abbotsford.

This Convention was so timed as to secure the presence of three of our grandest Eastern men, who were in the West in connection with the Laymen's Missionary movement,—namely, Rev. Dr. R. P. McKay, Rev. Dr. Grant, and Rev. Dr. Shearer. Of our local men there were present, Rev. Principal McKay and Rev. R. J. Wilson. It was a splendid and inspiring convention and will be long remembered in the Valley.

The Committee in charge determined to use local men as far as possible. This plan was largely adhered to, and some of the busiest men in the Presbytery rendered valuable service. Yet it ought to be said that the assistance given by the Assembly's Committee on Social Service and Evangelism was a factor of the highest value in achieving the excellent results that were attained.

P. W.