

## A GREAT EVANGELIST—THE SECOND ADVENT.

Our little corporate town has one or two things on which it plumes itself. One of these is its rather stately Young Men's Christian Association building, which juts out prominently on the corner of our High street. Here it is that we hold our revival meetings and special services. Here meets our Evangelical Alliance; the members of which—belonging to the different sects—meet once or twice a year, and manage to get through their session without eating one another. And here it is we receive the flotsam and jetsam of the religious world, which drifts to our shores from Britain, or is dropped overboard from the United States. We always give these strangers a warm welcome: forsaking often first-class men in our own pulpits, and crowding to hear second or third-class men on the platform of our Association Hall. One of these has just come and gone. His attractions were that he was author of a little religious book which has had an extensive circulation and is said to have done much good, and that he was brother to—his brother.

The professed *role* of this gentleman is that of the evangelist: the man who is supposed to have special power in impressing the truths of the Gospel of Christ upon the consciences of men, and of subduing them under its influence. But our visitor—like some others of his class—has also a special part, in which he only appears when circumstances are favorable, or “by particular request.” This particular request having been given by an eccentric humorist of our town, the great revivalist was announced accordingly to lecture on the Second Advent. Coming out from hearing him I ran against Brown, whom I had noticed taking sly notes in the corner of the hall.

“Well, Brown,” I cried, “what do you think of our new light?” “Don’t,” said he, “I must calm down before I can talk.” “Come across to my office, and cool yourself by talking,” said I.

We found our mutual friend Robinson waiting for me. I had not noticed him in the hall, but I was glad to see him, for we always look to Robinson as our walking concordance and Bible-dictionary. It being chilly, we soon gathered round the steam “radiator,” at whose flat face and cheerful dimples Brown sat staring silently for a few moments, when he burst out, “I don’t know what you fellows think of what we have been hearing, but for my part I am disgusted.”

“Brown,” said I, “you grieve and surprise me. Was not the speaker a man of great eloquence, of powerful voice, and attractive anecdotal style? Was he not full of matter which — ‘Which never came to a head,’ said Brown, (who is a little coarse in some of his similes): ‘No, no; Smith, my boy,’ he continued; (I may say that my name is Smith, though I conceal it in signing this paper): ‘You are too good-natured: We were invited to hear about the Second Advent; but for an hour we only heard about the speaker; who only began to approach his subject after the hour of closing had arrived, telling us then that he wished he had twenty hours in which to discuss it. Possibly had he had them, we might have had some information and argument, instead of mere discursive and tangential allusions.’”

“I will admit,” said I, “that the speaker was discursive, but surely he kept on holy ground in all his wanderings: and you must have had a new revelation of Grace and Truth in his wonderfully deep searchings after the inner meaning and deep philosophy of the Scriptures?” Says Brown, “I had a new revelation of Assurance and Egotism: I was astounded at the coolness with which he brought out old familiar commonplaces with the air of a new discoverer. It was delicious when he asked us if we had ever noticed that Abraham left off asking that Sodom might be spared, before God left off granting! Why, even old Matthew Henry might have taught him that. Oh! he has a fine eye for piercing a mill-stone!”

“But, surely,” I said, “he told us nothing but truths, and told them with a fervid, free, impassioned utterance that struck into one’s very soul?” “Yes, we had truths; but they were mostly truisms. It was very interesting, for instance, to learn that the earth moves round the sun, and that our solar system is but a part of the great universe, but that the ancients thought differently; and that it was highly important that a locomotive should be on the right line of rails; but it did not need a man to come three thousand miles and take twenty minutes to tell us these things, with a tone and manner as if he alone had the secret and held the copyright.”

“Oh! but,” I contended, “there were some things in which our visitor showed that he *had* made special discoveries in Biblical study: he told us repeatedly that he had found the key to the interpretation of the Scripture.” “I know,” replied Brown; “he said, with a superior smile, that *ordinary* Christians interpreted thus and so, and could no more fit the teaching of different Scriptures together than his little boy could fit the countries in a dissected map; but that he, the *extra*-ordinary, could deftly fit every text into its place in his scheme of interpretation: yet we did not get the interpretation. He neither opened the door, nor did he shew us the key. And as to his impassioned utterances, it seemed to me that he thought that being away from home, everything he had to say would be new to us poor benighted colonists, and so he threw out whatever came first, whether it related to his subject, or to any other under the sun. Thus he used up his time without telling us much about the Second Advent.”

Here Robinson quietly asked me if I could repeat what the lecturer had said about the Second Advent. I was compelled to confess that I had the faintest idea; except that I understood him to say that the Gospel was a failure; and that the world must wait for the Lord’s coming, as that was the hope of the Church.

“Did he say that?” shouted Robinson; “the man must be mad: or blind.” I begged him to keep quiet, as we all know that Robinson has some queer new notions himself on the Second Advent, and I did not care to have it all out just then.

But he burst out like fire. “The Gospel a failure? the man who says so is ignorant of all Scripture, and denies all history. Where on the face of God’s earth is the country or the community into which the Gospel has been introduced, that is the worse for it? Is it not winning its way into every land? and is not every land eventually the better for its coming?”

“But,” I argued, “you must allow that there is great evil and wickedness

everywhere, and that even the most Christian communities are continually being shocked by discoveries of crime, even in the churches.”

“Yes,” replied Robinson; “but formerly they were not shocked at such things. Where is the Christian church to-day that has a membership like that of Corinth in Paul’s day? Where is the body of clergymen who resemble the Anglicans of the 18th century? Where the non-conformists who would repeat the errors and cruelties of the Round-head and the Puritan? And if our newspapers are filled with sad stories of sin, it is only because we *have* newspapers, and reporters; a telegraph and a police. Take any department of life and you will find amelioration. Some talk of political corruption, and it is bad enough; but what is it to the day when Pitt had the House of Commons in his breeches pocket? and what was that to the farther back days when kings and noblemen traded shamelessly in the national revenues? The Gospel a failure! Then is all Missionary work a blunder and a folly; and the Church, which has but just awakened to a sense of its responsibility and duty, may fold its hands and await another ‘hope of the Church’ which is to accomplish what the Gospel cannot.”

Brown now broke in with the remark that Robinson had only partially stated the case. Instead of the world growing worse, and the Church being more corrupt, never was there a time when there were so many good men and women, and never a time when they were doing so much to show their love to God by love and goodwill to their neighbour. Said he, “When before have we heard of international charities and sympathies as we have done the past twenty years? The one old example of the collection in the Gentile churches for the relief of the starving Jewish Christians, was but the faint shadowing of the benevolence of these days of the Indian Famine Fund, and the Chinese Fund and the Yellow Fever Fund; of Christian Commissions to succour the wounded of both contending armies; of ‘Nightingale’ nurses and the Geneva Cross! and if centuries ago we had a Pascal and the Port-Royalists to exemplify a purer Christianity, have we not now these very men of the ‘higher life’ who, according to their own showing are the most wonderfully enlightened and the most spiritually minded men whom the world has ever seen since Apostolic days. ‘The Gospel’ has formed such men as the reverend lecturer we heard, and therefore surely there is some hope for the church, and for the world also! And if it be a failure, why does he continue to preach it, and to live by it?”

I ventured to agree with this: and coupled with it the name of Moody; to whom I thought our Second Adventist had a strong general resemblance. “Yes,” said Brown, “he has the round Moody head, and the square Moody beard, and the limp Moody Bible. He has the Moody manner, and the Moody doctrine; but—he is not Moody.”

“My objection,” said Robinson, more calmly than before, “is not to this or that man, or this or that manner: neither is it to the general religious teaching of these good men: but simply to their inconsistency in this matter of the Second Advent. How dare any of the tribe call themselves ‘evangelists’? What is their evangel? Is it any other than was given us by Christ, and continued by Paul? If so, ‘let it be accursed’: if not, then—‘the hope of the church’ is still that ‘the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the Communion of the Holy Ghost’ may accomplish the redemption of the world; without our helplessly waiting for a problematical bodily manifestation of the Lord Jesus to destroy His enemies by the lustre of His presence and the weight of His arm. My own thought is that perhaps it will be found on closer examination of New Testament prophecy that the ‘Second Coming’ of Christ was fulfilled in His virtual return to destroy Jerusalem; that now He is reigning as King of the new age, and gradually but surely destroying His enemies—that is, every form of evil—by the sword of His mouth or the power of His truth: that the redeemed earth is being regenerated, and that the ancient word which speaks of universal subjection to the blessed rule of the Son of God shall yet be fulfilled. I grant you that there is very much to be done in two ways: much territory still to be visited with Gospel light, and much to be done in Christian lands to extend the rule of Christ over the whole life of men. But never was there so much being done to spread the Gospel far and wide over the world: the work of this century exceeds that of sixteen previous. And never was Christian preaching so insisting and so practical as now. Never was the pulpit so little given over to theoretical controversy; and never was it so hotly engaged in the polemics of sin and righteousness. Antinomianism is dead and buried: the Lord deny it a resurrection evermore. And the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, will not be sheathed till victory is won. The Lord hasten it.” So spoke Robinson: and so spoke Brown: and so said I. And our symposium adjourned. QUISQUIS.

## AGRI-HORTICULTURAL DEPARTMENT.

**HILLSIDE GLEANINGS.**—While visiting the city I was surprised to find so many flower-loving people who expressed regret that flowers would not thrive in their furnace-heated, gas-lighted houses. “The roses always drop their leaves and die,” said one lady in a tone of deep regret, and another, who had made a specialty of colours in summer, lost them all before the holidays. The fancy hanging-baskets, so beautiful in their drooping grace, soon fade when they leave the greenhouse and become unsightly unless kept in a constant state of moisture that does not suit a parlour; and even the long-suffering geraniums become as if in the sere and yellow leaf, without foliage or flower to repay the labour of tending. There are, of course, exceptions where a moist air and magical fingers work wonders; but the greater part of those who love flowers have turned to Wardian cases for their greenery and decided to buy their winter blossoms. It is for these I am about to write an account of the flowers that thrive best in living rooms with ordinary care, and are likely to blossom through the winter. The plants first on my list for this purpose are carnations and Chinese primroses, the latter being sure to bloom, and continuous. The rose *bon se’lene* gives magnificent buds, and a *calla* is often satisfactory where plenty of water and air is given. But if one has tried these plants and failed, I can safely say that if you turn your attention to Holland bulbs, you will not be disappointed.

Hyacinths are easily grown in pots or glasses, but a prettier, more *garden-like* effect, is obtained by a box placed on, or in front of a window sill. In the