

THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND EVANGELISM

There are two essential factors in the over-all program of the Christian church. They are evangelism and education. These are not contrary one to the other; they are mutually helpful. Neither can succeed in a large degree without the other. Education without evangelism loses its fundamental motivation and fails in its primary purpose, which is to elevate and redeem mankind, and to build a Christian society. ^{On the other hand} while evangelism without education can only be temporary and partial in its success, for it falls short of its ultimate goal in that it does not produce fruit unto perfection, ~~as the results necessary for its own perpetuation.~~

Evangelism is the proclaiming of the good news of God's love, and grace revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus ~~Christ~~, with the purpose of making converts to Christ. Christian education is the inculcation of Christian ideals and ethics into the spirit and practice of men until they are able to follow successfully the example of Him who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." According to Dean Bertha Munro of Eastern Nazarene College, ^{The essence of Christian teaching is} "Christ the Truth: The Christian philosophy as the standard of thinking. Christ the Life: Christian experience as the basis of character. Christ the Way: The Christian ideal of conduct and service as a practical guide." ^{This} ~~such~~ a concept of life must be fostered by evangelistic preaching and by consistent Chris-

tian teaching. Such a purpose can only be achieved if we recognize the Interdependence of Christian Education and Evangelism.

When Christianity ceases to be evangelistic it will soon be no longer Christian. Evangelism is the normal expression of the spiritual life of a Christian. When such expression is no longer in evidence, spiritual life will begin to decline. Instead of being vigorous and aggressive, the church will become decadent: Instead of pushing out to fulfill the Great Commission, she will become institutionalized, ingrown, and anaemic.

The Church of the Nazarene is the product of Christian evangelism of a very distinctive character. It is pentecostal evangelism, with a clear-ringing emphasis on heart purity received through entire sanctification, bringing the Christian into the state of holiness or moral perfection. The progress we have witnessed in the past forty years is due to our adherence to that concept of truth which brought us into being, Preaching an evangelistic message of holiness for all by faith has become our distinctive genius.

In doctrine we are committed irrevocably to the Wesleyan interpretation of the scriptures, which testifies to the clear witness of God's Spirit both to justification and entire sanctification as a second definite work of grace. In program we are committed just as irrevocably to the method of evangelism. This method has two complimentary aspects: First, there is the public preaching of the full gospel message. Second, there is the time-honored and God-honored method of visitation or personal evangelism. Our Mid-Century Crusade for Souls incorporates both, and makes it clear that

either without the other is inadequate.

It has been said that there is only one department of the church, and that is the department of evangelism. Obviously there are several departments, but all of them agree in their purpose-- to bring the gospel of God's saving grace to all men everywhere. Therefore, every function of the church has bearing on the work of evangelism. This makes place for Christian education.

Education, if it be of the right character, has a very great and helpful effect upon the program of evangelism. Education is a vital and integral part of our total evangelistic undertaking. Education must prepare the way for successful soul-winning. If we have not taught men the truth of God's Word, which makes ^{them} ~~men~~ wise unto salvation, then we can hope for a very meager return from our evangelistic efforts. If any results are gained without the seed sowing in spiritual instruction, they are very scant. If we have not prepared the minds and consciences of those with whom we deal, then we are indebted to others for having done it for us. Either in the home or in the church, the seed time has preceded the harvest. Hence, the necessity of religious instruction through church schools, daily vacation Bible schools, and week-day religious education under trained leaders.

Christian education is also essential to the preservation of the fruits of evangelism. When the momentous decision to accept Christ as Savior and Lord has been made, when the soul has entered into the joyous experience of the new birth; then, only the first round of the battle to live a life of continuous victory over sin has been won. Further instruction is necessary that this new con-

vert may see the light of holiness and press on into the experience of entire sanctification. For the sanctified Christian, there is much to learn about holy living, growth in grace, effective service for Christ and the church. Guidance through careful instruction is needed for all. If Christian experience is something left exclusively in the realm of the emotional, it will be fluctuating if not passing. New converts must be nourished because the roots of their faith have struck deep into the soil of the truth of God's holy Word. Without such nourishment to the spiritual life, new Christians are like cut flowers--for a brief time they are beautiful and fragrant, but they soon wither and die. Could this be the explanation for the embarrassment we suffer because many of our people, particularly young people, are found frequently at the altar to do their first works again?

Christian education is necessary as an implementation of evangelism. Those who will carry on the work of evangelism must be prepared for it by education. That there is a kind of education that is hostile to evangelism, none can deny; but that evangelism can be perpetuated without trained leaders is a futile hope. Christ trained the men ^{for three and a half years} who were to carry out the Great Commission for ~~three and a half years~~. That would be as much time as that consumed in actual pursuit of a college degree with six months for specialization.

Every religious movement that has lived beyond the generation in which it had its inception, has established centers of learning. Indeed, most of the great colleges and universities of

America were brought to birth by the church with the view to its own perpetuation. Among them, Harvard University is a good example. The purpose of its founders is expressed in these words, "After God had carried us safe to New England, and we had builded our houses, provided necessities for our livelihood, reared convenient places for God's worship and settled the Civil Government, one of the next things we longed for was to advance learning and perpetuate it to posterity, dreading to leave an illiterate ministry to the churches when our present ministry shall lie in the dust." The leaders and founders of the Church of the Nazarene were men of clear, farseeing vision. They had scarcely started to build churches until they began to build schools and colleges to prepare future leaders. Their zeal for home and foreign missions was intense, but they knew the only way to promote and preserve their work of evangelism was to educate young people to perpetuate what they had started. It would be easy to estimate the dire results that would now be witnessed had those worthy men of yesterday planned otherwise. Who would man our institutions, guide our thought, fill our pulpits, or bear our standards in home and foreign lands today?

Religious movements have deteriorated and become largely ineffective because they have neglected revivals, omitted an evangelistic appeal, and turned to religious education exclusively. But many that have given no consideration to Christian education have died too young to find a place in the recorded history of the church of Jesus Christ. Therefore, in the development of our policy in the promotion of the work of evangelizing foreign mission

fields, we have discovered that an adequate program of education is an absolute necessity. Adult converts should, where possible, be taught to read and write. Children of our converts must be given elementary educational advantages and go on to attain secondary and higher education, so that they can become the leaders of their people, thus ultimately bringing them to better standards of living. Unless such provisions are made, the fruit of our investment in lives and money, will be limited as to permanence and extent.

As a matter of fact, schools of learning have not only perpetuated evangelism in the earth; they have also witnessed the beginning of most of the far-reaching revivals of the Christian centuries. Therefore, it is fallacious and foolish to look upon education and evangelism as opposed one to the other. They are interdependent!

Thus far in this discussion our attention has been given to the contribution made by Christian education to evangelism. Now it is time to give place to the role that evangelism plays in the work of Christian education. It is scarcely necessary to note that apart from evangelism, there would be none to bear the responsibility of providing and imparting Christian education; there would be no consecrated money to provide the material necessities for such work; there would be no qualified persons to assume the responsibility of instruction; and furthermore, there would be no Christian parents to build Christian homes and rear children to attend the schools and colleges. That means there would be no students to learn, as well as no teachers to teach. The demand for Christian education

comes from the fact that the fruits of evangelism are being harvested.

Again, evangelism which results in the conversion of sinners and the entire sanctification of believers, conditions the mind of man to receive the things of the spirit of God. The natural man does not grasp the things of the Spirit. They are foolishness to him because they are spiritually discerned. These things are revealed to the new-made man by the spirit of God because he has the mind of Christ. For this reason, the great spiritual truths that form the foundation of our Christian faith have been perverted and denied by many who teach and by those they have taught. No man is safe to teach unless he knows God in a personal experience: No one is prepared to learn aright until he has been born again. This is the basic argument for holiness colleges of the character of Olivet Nazarene College. Only those who have embraced the gospel and have been transformed by a living faith are fit to teach or are ready to learn. Therefore, evangelism must not only precede education; it must ever accompany it.

Again, it takes evangelism to keep the ideals and doctrines of Christianity vital. As soon as the vision and passion to share with others our manifold blessings wanes, doctrines begin to fossilize and ideals lose their grip. For example, moral purity is one of our lofty Christian standards, but it can only exist where there is an atmosphere of spiritual fervency. Perfect love crowns our idealism with glory, but it does not exist where the passion to give the gospel to others as freely as we have received it, does not motivate our service. In short, it takes evangelism to keep

Christianity Christian. Thus we see the interdependence of evangelism and Christian education.

An institution that would keep the balance between the two, must have a clear vision of the purpose for which it exists. A brief summary of such purpose may be outlined in five points:

First. It must be candidly admitted that a college is intended to develop intellectual capacity. This is not attained by the accumulation of a fund of factual knowledge alone. It means that literature, philosophy, mathematics and science are studied to develop the ability to think clearly and arrive at valid conclusions. Such a purpose gives meaning to the study of subjects which may have only indirect bearing on the vocation one may have chosen.

Second. The building of character is included in the purpose of a college. Moral values must be accurately ^{weighed} ~~weighed~~. Stability must be maintained in a world where fixed standards of conduct are ridiculed. Independent choice and action is necessary regardless of the fact that "everybody is doing it." And in spite of social pressures that are felt by all who live, sound moral judgment must be possessed. Black must be seen black ^{at the night} ~~white~~ seen as white as the light. Everything cannot be mingled and gray in the realm of moral standards.

Third. Christian education must clarify the spiritual understanding. Ability to comprehend the things that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard" must be acquired. The graduate of a holiness college must, like Moses, "endure as seeing Him who is invisible." He must think his way through to a sound Christian philosophy of

life and live thereby.

Fourth. The educational process of a college like this must result in the orientation of its students to life in this present world. They cannot be told that all is well. Dark and sinister forces of evil are powerfully at work in the world. Of these things the youth of today must be informed. He is not to be led to believe that salvation is a creation of an escapist philosophy. He must face the stern realities of the times courageously and intelligently. His Christian faith must be sufficiently strong to make him "more than conqueror" in all these things. Neither is the person prepared to live effectively today who has adopted a defeatist attitude toward life. When one has come to the place that he says, "What's the use trying to be good or make others good," he is useless liability to society. That we are in days of change and uncertainty, none can deny. That our youth do not face a rosy dawn is true. But there have been other dark times in human history too. In 1848 Lord Shaftesbury said, "Nothing can save the British Empire from shipwreck." In 1849 Disraeli said, "In industry, commerce and agriculture there is no hope." In 1852 the dying Duke of Wellington said, "I thank God I shall be spared from seeing the consummation of the ruin that is gathering around us." Even in 1801 Wilberforce said, "I dare not marry, the future is so uncertain." And in 1806 the great William Pitt said, "There is scarcely anything around us but ruin and despair." Today's youth must have clear-eyed vision, dauntless faith and a hope that springs eternal as he faces life.

Fifth. The fifth objective that a Christian college is to seek is to give its product an intelligent outlook for the future. Such an outlook must not be presumptuous. Life is still a struggle against evil, against inertia and against failure. The college graduate has no magic by which he can change his way into a rose-bordered path, free from temptation, hardship and hazard. The world is no friend to grace. Its atmosphere is not conducive to holiness. Satan and sin are still on the loose. Victory is not automatic. The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong: But to the true and the faithful victory is promised.

While presumption that life will be easy must be avoided, emancipation from despair and fear is to be gained in a Christian education. It is true that we are living in the atomic age. It is repeatedly stated that now man has discovered the power by which he can destroy the race of man and all our present civilization. But he who would live a fruitful life must remember that God is still at the controls, and that through all the changes of time His "eternal thought moves on." With such an outlook, the youth of today can achieve success. He can attain a good standard of life for himself. He can help others to do likewise. He can make some contribution to human betterment. He can advance God's kingdom on the earth.

The institution that would keep a balance between Christian education and evangelism must give attention to its curriculum. It must make theology "the queen of the sciences," fundamental, central and pre-eminent. The Bible must be studied with an attitude of

reverence, with a purpose to grasp its deep spiritual meaning, rather than to destroy faith in its divine inspiration. We do not want a nebulous mysticism. Neither do we want a crude literalism. We are not interested in seeing plaster of Paris statues weep, nor are we concerned about mathematical calculations as to when the world will come to an end. We do want education that takes faith in the divine revelation contained in the holy scriptures into account. We do not want rationalized religion. We insist that revealed religion is intelligent, and that the highest intelligence is religious. The late Samuel Chadwick, Principal of Cliff College of England, declared, "The teaching of the Scriptures is never metaphysical, speculative or academic. The truth revealed is never formulated into a thesis or organized into a system of philosophy. It is revealed living experience and organized to practical values. The universal is revealed in the historical, the eternal is expressed in the temporal, and the spiritual is symbolized in the experimental....Faith is an organ of understanding and a method of proof, but it is faith, and it is by faith we are saved. Faith must not be spared the discipline of truth. Believers must think. It is impossible to say with how little intelligence faith may bring salvation but it is safe to say that it always takes all there is, whether it be in the mentally defective, the colossal scholar or the man of brilliant genius....Faith is not unreason. Nothing could be more false than the idea that it is the assent to things not proved, the evidence of things not true to reason. It is not a faculty that makes credulity meritorious. Faith deals with the unseen, not with

the unreasonable. It proves. It searches the deep things of God that it may be able to give reason for its hope....There is much we ought to know. Such knowledge strengthens faith, deepens reverence, inspires devotion, and constrains to service."

For training in a holiness college to foster evangelism, the administrative officers and the teaching staff must personify Christian doctrine, experience and practice. Loyalty to truth must be more than a lip service. Instruction must not be in the nature of theoretical platitudes; it must be a testimony to experiential truth. Ethics must be taught by practice as well as precept. The standards of holiness must be demonstrated as well as idealized. We cannot hope for the desired results if we have academic "brass hats," who know nothing of the rigors of the battle line, handing down orders to green volunteers. We cannot have religious "stuffed shirts" in the stead of virile, active leaders of thought and action. We will trust the education of youth only to those who are spiritually alert, as well as intellectually equipped; who are ready to testify to regeneration and entire sanctification as a present experience, as well as expound the doctrine of salvation by faith; who are capable of praying souls through at an altar, as well as counselling them concerning their problems and adjustments; who live holy lives harmonious with the accepted traditions of the holiness people, as well as protest their loyalty to the prescribed standards of conduct.

Professors in all departments must skilfully relate their subject matter to Christian truth. Science and religion must be

harmonized, not made to appear antagonistic. History must be taught with candor conducive to faith, not with cynicism that embitters the spirit. Philosophy and psychology must be made to support Christian doctrine and experience, instead of leaving everything in the realm of the speculative and hypothetical. Literature and languages are to be taught in such a manner as to develop a sympathetic attitude toward peoples of all ages and races. The fine arts are to prepare students for more effective service through the improvement of their talents. It must be the ambition of every professor and instructor to educate the youth of the church for the church and the fulfillment of its divine mission in the redemption of all humanity. To educate them away from such a purpose would be a violation of trust. To educate them for it is the cause for the existence of a holiness college. Faith, rather than knowledge, is to be the controlling influence in such a college. These support rather than destroy one another.

This is not intended to lead anyone to the conclusion that the only purpose of a college like this is to train preachers and workers who will devote their lives to full-time Christian service. That is the primary purpose, but it is not the sole task of the college. We not only have a debt to the church to provide leaders for it; we also have a debt to the youth of the church to provide basic training for them in a Christian atmosphere regardless of what vocation they may choose. The day of a Nazarene university is remote, no doubt. We will not be offering graduate courses save in religion for years to come, but we can offer training in a standard

college of liberal arts that will be accepted anywhere. Our failure to do so will be without excuse. And such failure may turn many of our choice youth to other colleges and away from the church in which they have been nurtured. The church of tomorrow will need laymen of the calibre of business and professional men and women. Without such, we cannot fulfill our mission. By providing them college training second to none in quality, we can save most of them to the church. Our failure to do so will leave responsibility for our loss of them upon ourselves to a great extent.

In a college where education and evangelism are coexistent and co-operative, there must be freedom of religious expression in worship, in fellowship, in testimony and active Christian service; hence the necessity of chapel and church services, revivals, and an intelligently directed program of religious activity in which all participate. In such a place, devotion and faith grow together with learning; the development of the spiritual life keeps pace with the increase of knowledge. And knowledge without God leads to the possession of the power to destroy rather than to save. Material progress without a spiritual equivalent leads to confusion and chaos. In a balanced development of the mind and spirit, there is security and abiding joy for the individual; there is hope of the salvation of society; there is an encouraging prospect for the perpetuity and progress of democracy. Indeed, in such institutions as Olivet Nazarene College lies the hope of the survival of Christian civilization.

This college has grown large. It is even overgrown so far as ~~members~~ ^{numbers} go. We cannot be satisfied with mere bulk. The build-

ings and equipment on this campus must be made adequate and up to date for a college of this size. This is the task of the Board of Trustees, the constituency and the alumni. The educational standing of the college must be improved until it is in question nowhere. This is the task of the administration and faculty. Spirituality, campus morale, cultural ideals and discipline must be maintained on a high plane. This is a task for all of us;--from students to faculty and president, from the least known parent to the top leaders of the church. The challenge is to all of us. Let us all put our backs beneath the burden and help to carry the responsibility till the goal before us is reached in the shortest possible time. We have God to help us, for it is "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord."

Let us complete the task of evangelization of the world, giving Christian education to all. And let us educate to evangelize.

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