

movement. Fathers are away on service, Mothers are in munitions, communal meals are a vogue, children are evacuated. Divorce is of course easier. On the other hand the Registrar-General in his report for 1938 showed that of the girls married in that period under twenty years of age, forty per cent were pregnant at the time of marriage. Juvenile crime figures also disclose a grave situation. The percentage of criminals under eighteen years of age is enormous and nearly fifty per cent of the crimes have been committed by young persons little older than mere children.

All this is traceable to one thing—the failure to recognise the finality of God's Law. Children are no longer taught that a thing is wrong because it is contrary to the will of God. Their cry is "Why can't I?" They do not realise what sin is and why it is sin. Thus there is no occasion for surprise that young people do not react to the Gospel, for they do not know their religion. The inefficiency of Religious education to-day lies at the root of all this.

There are two great needs that are necessary for the life of society to-day, especially among the young. First of all it is that there should be a movement to teach them their religion. Neither parents nor children know it. In the Roman Church they have a Catechism of the Creed which is used even in the prisons. We need to have some such manual which by simple question and answer sets out the teaching of the Christian faith. Secondly, young people do not know how to pray and they must be taught.

We must begin again, starting from such foundations if we are to make any headway in the regeneration of society. God has given us a great opportunity in these days. May we all do our part and fulfil His purpose in the work.

Evangelical Unity as a Fruit of Evangelism

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IF Evangelism is a primary charge upon the Christian Church in respect of her temporal life and work, and, by sheer force of the very title they claim, a primary responsibility of Evangelicals within that Church, not less is it true that Unity is both a primary test and a primary "desideratum" both of the Church in general and of Evangelicals in particular. And if we are all in general agreement, as it may be assumed that we are, that each of these statements is true, it can hardly be possible that they are unrelated to one another. "But where shall 'unity' be found?" The story of the search for it is not altogether encouraging. Credal formulæ seem to say "It is not in us": certainly, they cannot produce it. Liturgical experiments at discovering forms of worship acceptable and helpful to Christians of quite different tempers and traditions have not proved

more fruitful. Their promoters are apt to assume a unity which does not in fact exist, at any rate in the intensity necessary to give to the experiments that spiritual spontaneity without which they must inevitably "fall flat." Or, more realist but vaguely uneasy about the lack of adequate and antecedent basic unity, our liturgical experimentists seek a refuge in the lowest common measure of Christian sentiment, or a frankly freakish creation which may not satisfy anyone but is sure at least to surprise everybody! Social concern for human welfare, our chief modern expedient, will not prove more productive of true unity than its predecessors. As an activity pursued within the terms of its immediate and confessed reference it has much to be said in its favour, and Evangelicals ought not to be conspicuous only for loud-voiced suspicion, and parrot-like criticism, of it. But to assume that a co-operation born of social concern is either an expression of, or a means to, Christian unity is merely to shut one's eyes to obvious and ugly facts, and, worse still, to do serious hurt to the cause which we profess to serve. We can forget for purposes outside the cause of Christian unity facts which we simply cannot ignore when that great issue is before us. No progress will be made unless and until those same facts are treated with the realism that they demand.

"What shall we say then to these things?" Shall we solve our problem by asserting a spiritual unity which is content to seek no outward expression in the Church's corporate life and work? Or shall we fall back upon the time-honoured device of belief in the unity of the Invisible Church—a reality, indeed, but too often used only as a Protestant expedient for postponing the problem to the Greek Kalends,—the Invisible Church meanwhile being also the Church Inaudible and the Church Inoperative? No one with the New Testament in his hands can seriously maintain that such a policy would have commended itself either to the Divine Intercessor Who has left us the evidence and the challenge of His 'High-Priestly Prayer' recorded in St. John 17, or to the great Apostle of the Gentiles who saw his converts as "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit." Either such a vision means a measure of such corporate and discernible unity as the whole Church has not yet attained or words and metaphors would seem to be meaningless. And it is by that revelation of the will and purpose of God for His Church that we must always be guided, even more than by recognition of the tragic enfeeblement and ineffectiveness that are produced by our historic failure to achieve it.

But some man will say—How is the vision to be realised and, in any case, what is the relation of this dissertation to the proposed topic of the paper which, quite specifically, is supposed to be Evangelical Unity as a fruit of Evangelism? Actually, we have not strayed very far from the limits imposed upon us. For, to begin with, Evangelicals, even within the limits of the Anglican Communion, have their own share of responsibility for the disunity that we deplore, and no more effective step towards curing our ills, and promoting

the New Testament ideal, can be imagined than precisely that of "putting our house in order" in this particular matter. It would be tedious and embarrassing, but happily it is unnecessary, to detail the points of such disagreement among us as constitute genuine and grave disunity. Some of them result "from magnifying our certainties to condemn all differences," some "from magnifying" a particular system or interest for wordly policy, some from arrogance, and not a few, to speak quite plainly, from sheer ignorance of the true and basic nature of essential, as opposed to merely apparent or incidental, Evangelicalism. I know no one who does not, in the secret places of his own soul, deplore this state of affairs however incapable he may feel of setting it right, or however publicly involved in permitting it to continue. Further, almost every one of us would agree that to leave matters where they now stand within the limits of our own school of thought is to render impossible any practical contribution to the wider problem. It is both tragic and futile for Anglican Evangelicals to pay lip-service to an œcumenical idea while we stereotype our own divisions. And we shall have only ourselves to blame if the growing œcumenical will and movement of our day produces developments to which we can neither consent nor conform, and which, indeed, we have done nothing to control, by the sheer and simple fact of our own blundering divisions. But how are we to set right what is wrong in our own fellowship, or lack of fellowship? Experience clearly indicates that certain well-tried and well-trodden paths, which seemed to lead toward unity, are nothing better than blind alleys with repeated frustration and intensified bickerings and unprofitable disputations at the end of them. Unity among Evangelicals will not be achieved merely by the promulgation of findings, nor by the careful compilation of a doctrinal formula, nor, least of all, by liturgical uniformity. Not even within the limits of the Oxford Evangelical Conference would there be unanimous agreement for any theory of Biblical inspiration or on the North Side-Eastward Position issue. Such external and detailed unity could not be discovered. I would go much further and say that, in the judgment of many of us, it ought not even to be pursued!

"Evangelical Unity" is a phrase susceptible of at least two interpretations. Its surface meaning may well be Unity among Evangelicals. But it also suggests to my mind something much deeper, much nearer to the heart of the problem that we have been facing, and something of great promise for its solution. Evangelical unity, surely, means unity in the Evangel. That interpretation of the phrase suggests if not a new, at least a different approach to our problem. The issue is simplified and focused in terms of mission and message, rather than in others of more introspective origin. It is a good thing to be "taken out of ourselves"!

Divine in origin, human in membership, the Church of Jesus Christ is unique among historic institutions. She realises her nature and promotes her fellowship as, and only as, she lives in two realms at once. Heavenward, she is a community of worship. Earthward, she is a community of witness. Liable to a thousand enticements to dissipate

Him and frustrate herself. Our present concern is with her temporal mission, which is to be the age-long organ of witness by which the living Word of God is spoken to sinful man and sinful society. That witness is borne in many ways but chiefly by the proclamation of a distinct and peculiar message, and by the manifestation in an otherwise decadent society of a new and miraculous quality of life. The two are not independent of each other. The characteristic New Testament word for the new and miraculous quality of life is "fellowship"—a supernatural principle of human unity. And the more completely and loyally she discharges her mission of witness in the power of God's Spirit, the greater will be the degree of her realised fellowship. But what is the Word of God, the Evangel, entrusted to her? Neither Holy Scripture generally, nor the example of the Apostolic Church in particular, leaves us in any serious doubt on this all-important point. "When they had prayed, the place was shaken wherein they were gathered together: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness . . . And with great power gave the Apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all" (Acts iv. 31, 33). "And every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ" (Acts v. 42). "Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ . . . They believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ . . . Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they had been baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts viii. 5, 12, 14-16). The parallelism in these passages between the Word of God and preaching of the Lord Jesus is too close and too sustained to be merely accidental. And when we hold it in relation to other quite typical New Testament utterances its force is intensified. St. Paul sums up the essence of his Evangel, which he obviously regards as not his alone but that of the whole Church of his day, in two phrases—"We preach Christ crucified" (1 Cor. i. 23) and "We preach . . . Christ Jesus as Lord" (2 Cor. iv. 5). St. Luke has left it on record that the Master's parting commission to His followers was "Ye shall be my witnesses . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts i. 8). St. John tells us that "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth" (St. John i. 14).

The Evangel of the New Testament is declared beyond the possibility of doubt or misunderstanding. The Apostolic commission was to draw the attention of all men to the fact that "When the fulness of time came God sent forth His Son" to be both the embodiment of His Word and the supreme Agent of His redemptive purpose. The Apostolic witnesses were so to proclaim Him in all His fulness that men, led by the Spirit of God, would hear and accept and obey that Word. And because that living Word became, so to speak, supremely vocal at Calvary, it is, in particular, "the Word of the Cross" (1 Cor. i. 18)—by which St. Paul meant not *our* proclamation, still less our explanation, of Calvary, but the Word which the Cross itself declares,—that is

the word of spiritual judgment and of dynamic creative redemption. It "is to them that are perishing foolishness: but unto us which are being saved it is the power of God." In short, the first Evangelists went out into their world so to proclaim Jesus Christ in the totality of His Person, His Teaching, His Work, His Mission, that men might hear for themselves what God was saying about Himself and His nature, about man and his need, about a supreme redemptive purpose for individual man in the fellowship of a new Society. That mission and message bound them together in the living fellowship of an authoritative and imperative Crusade. And the crying need of Evangelicals of this generation is for such a change of perspective, such an adjustment of outlook, almost such a new mind and heart, that we, too, discover in the prosecution of this same Crusade a condition and an expression and an instrument of our true unity. That unity would be so self-manifesting that issues which divide would no longer enjoy an influence altogether disproportionate to their real significance.

It is the closing concern of this paper to suggest some specific and immediate applications of this principle of Evangelical fellowship. Let us see how it operates both negatively and positively. Take for example, our attitude toward "God's Word written." No true Evangelical is in practical doubt of its unique authority, an authority inherent in its total relation to the Word Incarnate. What really matters is that we should learn so to expound it that "beginning from Moses and from all the prophets" He should still be able, through His witnesses, to interpret "in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (St. Luke xxiv. 27). In the perpetual and ever-deepening discovery of the power of the Scriptures to illuminate and interpret Him, there is all that we need to know about their inspiration. New light continually breaks through them; their pre-eminence is evident in dynamic and creative effectiveness. The Bible approves itself an effectual Sacrament of the Eternal Word. If we are able so rightly to divide the word of truth that it witnesses to the Word made flesh, it becomes the instrument of regeneration. Any worth-while consideration of Biblical inspiration is always qualitative not quantitative, dynamic not academic. Of what avail would be even an inerrant formula of inspiration, unless it also ministered to the more effective preaching of the Word,—the Word which God has, in Christ, for this generation? And, in point of simple fact, no such inerrant formula is to be discovered, nor would it in the least degree help us to do our primary work even were this Conference so to prove itself a supreme Council of Wisdom that we succeeded where everyone has hitherto failed! On the other hand, let our modern Evangelicals set themselves, in dependence upon God's Holy Spirit, to preach Christ Jesus, and they will soon discover the relevance of the Bible as a vehicle of the Word relative to Him. On the other hand, to make a theory of Inspiration a test of Evangelicalism is merely to ensure a perpetration of our divisions.

Let us briefly notice another issue upon which Evangelicals within our Church have often been conscious of division—doctrinal interpretations of the Person and Work of our Lord. Let no one imagine that it is intended to suggest that false doctrine is unimportant or

innocuous. Any such judgment would be superficial, and false to the plain facts of Church history. The obvious danger in inadequate or erroneous doctrine is that it misrepresents the truth about Him Who is the Son and the Word of God, and may so seriously misrepresent that truth as to make it impossible for men to hear and obey His redemptive Word for them. But does anyone seriously suggest either that the New Testament Evangelists went out to proclaim doctrinal interpretation of the Incarnation and the Atonement or that the modern Evangelist is likely to make full proof of his ministry by so doing? Origen's Ransom Theory is a sad but significant witness to what happens when an illuminating idea, a word which is a picture, becomes a crystallised doctrine. Then, Anselm must correct Origen, and Abelard must supplement Anselm. And, with great seriousness, we evaluate the substitutionary view of the Atonement, the Representative view, the Ethical view, and, as if Christian truth were some sort of concoction, discuss how much of each doctrinal ingredient is required for a nutritive—by which we often mean merely a palatable!—interpretation of the Cross. In the end we produce a multitude of different recipes, confidently assert the vitamin values of our own and roundly denounce the poisonous qualities of many of the others, and do but little to feed the flock. Is this wholly an outrageous caricature of the actual facts? I think not: and at least it serves to emphasise the point that concerns me most—that the substitution of doctrines for Evangelism is productive chiefly of controversy and disunity. Sound and systematic doctrine has its vital place—had I not believed that I would not have tried to teach it for eleven years—but that place is after, not instead of, Evangelism. Let a man so proclaim—rather than explain!—Christ crucified that the Cross tells its own story, speaks its own word, and there comes into being a fellowship of those who hear and recognise and obey the Eternal Word. The preaching of the Cross *is* productive of discord, but between those who hear and those who resist its searching judgments. It is productive of fellowship among those for whom it proves itself a savour of life unto life.

Lest I seem to be merely labouring a theory at the expense of concrete facts, let me bring to your notice a simple experience from my family life. When, about ten years ago, my Mother to whose expression of Evangelicalism I owe more than I can ever acknowledge, visited me in Toronto, she began to attend, with some regularity, a certain non-Anglican Church, the minister of which, she had been told, was a great 'prophet of the Word.' Such indeed she found him to be, and through his pulpit ministry the living Word nourished her spirit and rejoiced her heart. Now it so happens that "after the most straitest sect of our tradition she lives an Evangelical"! And had anyone conversant with the facts been unwise enough to indicate to her, in advance, the points of doctrinal divergence between that prophet and herself she would have been horrified and scandalized. She never suspected them, despite no inconsiderable dexterity in such matters as I know from first-hand experience! When, late in the day, someone did, rather jokingly, hint at the peculiar views of this particular prophet her reply, far more in justification of him than of herself, was "Well, it doesn't matter, he preaches the Word!" So, indeed,

he did,—in the truest, deepest, sense of the phrase. Evangelism united, where doctrinal interpretations would have divided.

It would be fascinating to pursue this principle and discover exactly how far it would take us, and whither it would lead us. Time, if nothing else, forbids our so doing, but I should like to throw out, in the baldest form, an idea which seems to me to be worthy of some consideration. What of the differences which exist even among Evangelicals—to go no further afield—as to Sacramental doctrine and practice? Is the time not overdue for a distinctively *Evangelistic* approach to this whole question? I am not sure that we ought not to review the whole of our approach to the alleged twofold ministry of the Word and the Sacraments. Is it in fact a twofold Ministry, or one and the same ministry under two complementary forms? Is not true preaching itself a Sacrament of the Word, and are not the Sacraments a dramatic preaching of the Word? St. Paul certainly seems to have thought so as regards the Holy Communion. “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord’s death till he come” (1 Cor. xi. 26). And is not the distinctively Evangelical apology for the practice of Infant Baptism to be found in the fact that it asserts in the clearest fashion the priority of divine grace, the profoundly important truth that, always, “the initiative is with the Eternal”? The Sacraments are “Sacraments of the Gospel” in a much deeper sense than that they are merely Sacraments related to the Gospel. They are declarations of the Gospel, Evangelistic media, more potent and prophetic than most of us have yet recognised. And if we came so to regard and to use them, might we not both find in them a new kind of usefulness and advance toward the clearing-up of a whole field of irrelevant, and therefore unnecessary controversy. It is a somewhat startling reflection that even the Roman brother and the Plymouth Brother are not anything like so far separated in their sense of the importance and use of the Lord’s Supper, as they are in their doctrinal interpretations of it. Certainly it is high time that Evangelicals began to use the Sacraments far less as institutions productive of doubtful disputations, and far more as opening up a new approach to Evangelistic activity. Too many of us use them as though they were unrelated to the preaching of the Word, and, in consequence, we loudly lament, but do little to remove, the superstitions that attach to them in the popular mind.

If it is true that to keep clearly before us the Evangel with which we have been entrusted, and to preserve intact the loyalty that we owe to it, is also to save ourselves from unnecessary and disastrous pre-occupation with the issues that divide Evangelicals, not less is it true that the preaching of the Word, and the results that by God’s blessing follow it, are alike positive instruments of the unity for which we pray. We refer again to a most significant text already quoted from the Acts of the Apostles. “And with great power gave the Apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all” (Acts iv. 33). True prophecy, like true prayer, is possible only in the power of God’s Holy Spirit, and where that Spirit is operative fellowship, not less than liberty, results. A quickening and extending of New Testament Evangelism within the ranks of the Evangelical Clergy of our day would lead soon and

inevitably to a new fellowship among us. Nor would it stop there. Apart from our own manifold failures to fulfil God's conditions, there is no reason why it should not be written of the twentieth Century, of this Century, as it was of the first, that "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul" (Acts iv. 32). And, incidentally, we need continually to bear in mind that Evangelical Unity is a much wider thing than unity among Evangelical parsons—a fact which may easily be overlooked at such a Conference as this!

A quite different approach to this whole problem has, so far, been deliberately omitted, partly because of lack of time, but chiefly because it is more self-evident to all of us. Is there not sheer tragedy in, and the judgment of God upon, the fact that we permit divisions among us in view of the prevailing paganism in this nominally Christian land,—again to look no further afield! Look out upon the England of the middle twentieth Century, and ask yourself whether bickerings about the position of the Celebrant at the Lord's Table, the use or non-use of the Occasional Offices in the forms presented in the Revised Prayer Book, the number of the Psalms and the length of the Lessons in Morning and Evening Prayer, are anything other than the most futile ecclesiastical equivalent for Nero's fiddling while Rome was burning. "Let us not therefore judge one another any more," but address ourselves to every form, and every opportunity of proclaiming in a darkening world-order the living Word entrusted to us, which is also the only Word that speaks to its condition. Controversy from time to time there must be, but let us see to it that it is allowed only when there is danger that the Word of the Lord is either adulterated by human sophistries, or so smothered by ecclesiastical accretions that it cannot reach the souls of sinful men. And incidentally let it be acknowledged (in all honesty) that the accretions are not the exclusive prerogative and possession of a school of thought different from our own! It is significant that the New Testament only twice, so far as I can discover, establishes an issue of quite absolute controversial import,—and each has an Evangelistic relevance, the one for our message, the other for the quality of life which conditions it. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God . . . Every spirit which confesseth not Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of the antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it cometh; and now it is in the world already" (1 John iv. 1-3): and, "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Romans viii. 9). Not less challenging is it to contrast two recorded words of the Master: "He that is not with *me* is against me" (St. Matthew xii. 30): and, "He that is not against *us* is for us" (St. Mark ix. 40). Where He, the living Word, is an issue, compromise is intolerable, controversy inevitable. But let us beware of ostracising those who are, demonstrably, casting out devils in His name!

Hear the words—I would venture to suggest the almost inspired words—of our Church: "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." These familiar words from Article XIX do more than offer a definition; they also assert a twofold condition. If "a congregation of faithful

men " means anything it means a fellowship in which spiritual unity, after the New Testament pattern, is at least beginning to be realised. If it is indeed to find even a measure of realisation, the pure Word of God must be preached, the Sacraments *duly* administered. If there is any validity in the contentions of this paper Evangelism is therefore both a *sine qua non*, and an effective instrument, of Evangelical unity.

The Fruits of Evangelism Intercommunion

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I HAVE been allowed by the Chairman to take the subject of Intercommunion without too much reference to its being a fruit of Evangelism. For to tell the truth I am still in doubt as to whether the one is the outcome of the other that way round, though I believe that Evangelism is at least an outcome of Intercommunion, or could be made so if Intercommunion were more common. But I must be fair to those who chose the subjects. I have come across the following statement in Hugh Martin's quite excellent little book entitled "*Christian Reunion—a plea for action*"; "It is a fact never to be forgotten that the S. India Scheme, the most daring of all unity Schemes, had its birth in a joint evangelistic scheme." That of course is not strictly an illustration of Intercommunion being a fruit of Evangelism, but it does illustrate the fact that Evangelistic effort is bound to result in a desire for closer fellowship all round and Intercommunion is involved in that desire inevitably. The only movement that I personally know of which might be said to be an instance of Intercommunion being a fruit of Evangelism is the experiment made by Canon Guy Rogers at the Parish Church in Birmingham, where after some years of joint effort in Evangelism, with occasional open communion according to the Anglican rite, reciprocal Intercommunion was started and seems to have taken place with very little opposition. In "*The Church and the 20th Century*" a full account is given of this experiment (pp. 181-2) and I take this paragraph from Canon Guy Rogers' own statement "No greater testimony to the value of careful preparation through a period of years and to the wisdom of the policy that sacramental fellowship is something to be earned, could be found than the quiet acceptance of this service by the religious community of Birmingham as something really guided and inspired by the Spirit of God."

That Intercommunion ought to be a fruit of joint Evangelism, I take it we should all desiderate. And I propose now to examine the actual situation as it exists to-day, and see what it is which is holding back a forward movement in that direction—and what we as Evangelicals can do to remove obstacles and clear the ground for such action as our Free Church brethren think is long overdue.

Let us go back to Lambeth 1920, when the Bishops produced that