

WINNING MEN TO CHRIST

and

THE COVENANTER CHURCH

In seeking to build up the membership of the Covenanter Church, the first great step is to win men to Christ. "How can I do it?" the personal worker asks.

On a recent evening, a young man said to me, "I am trying to reach another young man,—my best friend—for Christ and our Church, but I don't seem to get anywhere."

I told him until the Holy Spirit possessed him for service, he would never win his friend. "Go home and pray for hours that you may be cleansed of sin and possessed of the Holy Spirit for service. Then, pray much for your friend and go to him full of anxiety because of his need and he will be impressed with your sincere interest and his own need. Keep praying and living before him and going to him until he is won. God will honor your faithful, consistent, persevering effort. 'My word shall not return unto me void.'

"Though bearing forth the precious seed
The reaper sowing grieves,
He doubtless shall return again
And bring with joy his sheaves."

Again, the worker is often confronted with objections which to him seem inconsequential and foolish. Yet the sinner may be quite sincere about them. It is always best to assume he makes them in good faith and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in meeting them.

The following may assist you. They have been used of the Holy Spirit in a number of cases and we venture to offer them.

1. "I don't believe in creeds."

"Are you sure? Since talking with you, I find you have a creed as definite as mine. What is a creed? Is it not what one believes? You could not be intelligent and not have a creed. Your statement that you do not believe in creeds is part of your creed. The Church must have a creed if she is possessed of intelligence. Her creed is the fruit of the study of generations of pious, able men. I believe when you study the Bible with me, you will believe my creed."

2. "I don't understand everything," or, "As soon as I understand everything I will profess Christ and the Church."

"But you don't do that in other things. Why take this attitude in religion? It is the Devil's trap to deprive you of wonderful blessings here and throughout eternity. You don't know why a red cow eating green grass gives white milk that produces yellow butter. But you use the milk and butter without question. Just accept God unquestioningly, and it will do for your soul what the other does for your body."

3. "I have my doubts and just can't get rid of them."

"But remember it is Satan who places doubts. Are you going to follow your old enemy? The moment you turn away from following after him to the Lord Jesus Christ, your doubts will fade, and peace and trust in Christ will replace them. Doubts are the Devil's paralysis for you. Instead, let Christ warm and strengthen you."

4. "There are hypocrites in the Church."

"Yes, Christ had one among his apostles and we have a few to-day. But you don't stay out of town or business for such a reason. Why, then, stay away from Christ and out of His church? There will always be hypocrites so long as there is sin. A few of them get into the Church. Most of them are in the world. It is always Satan who makes hypocrites of men. Why stay out with him where most of them are, instead of going with Christ into His Church where there are only a few? Besides, there will be no hypocrites in heaven and that is where one is wanting to get."

5. "I am doing the best I know and God will never send me to hell."

"Are you doing the best you know? If you were trying to swim from New Orleans to St. Louis and someone came alongside and invited you to ride in his good power-boat, could you say you were doing your best to get to St. Louis by water if you did not get in? You could never swim it. No man is doing his best to get to God and heaven unless he accepts the invitation, 'Come unto me' and gets in and lets God carry him safely. Jesus is the way. There is no other way. Besides, you are sending yourself to hell unless you get in. You may blame it on God now, but not in the Day of Judgment."

6. "Not to-day."

"If not to-day, it may never be. This moment

is yours, but you do not know what to-morrow may reveal. The warning is, 'To-day if you will hear his voice, harden not your heart.' 'To-day is the day of salvation.' Often the things we put off are never done. Someone has said, 'Procrastination is the thief of time.' *Listen, friend! It is the thief of eternity.*"

7. "I don't feel like it."

"You may not feel like dying when your time comes, but you will do it. You do not feel like getting up and going to work early on a cold morning, but you will. You don't pay your grocery bill only when you feel like it. Becoming a Christian is a matter of your will. 'If any man will . . . he shall be saved.' You will be forgiven and saved when you 'will' to be. Make up your mind to do it and you will find yourself a happy Christian. God never turned away any repentant sinner, and He will not refuse you. Say now, 'I will.' Tell God you have decided to turn to Him and are now for-ever renouncing the world and sin. Let us each pray."

The next step is to indoctrinate him in the principles of our profession. To do this, you must know your Bible along two special lines.

First, *the order of the House of God*, which includes three things, the first of which tells the way God wants the Church governed—that is, a Church ruled by Sessions, Presbyteries, etc. The second tells what God wants us to use in praising Him—the Psalms as the only book of praise. The third tells how He wants nothing introduced into the song service to take away from the simple praise by heart and voice alone—that is, no instrumental music in worship.

Second, *the separated life of the Christian*. You must be able to show how God requires that while you live in this world of sin, you are not to be part-takers in those sins; and that God, because it is best for you, requires that in everything in which the Lord Jesus Christ is left out, you should prefer to stay out with him; and that since the Bible is the basis of your life, you must separate yourself from every activity in which anything contrary to it, wholly or in part, is the basis.

This separates one from business corporations where the golden rule and the fourth commandment and other rules are violated. One just must put his money in something where God's laws are obeyed. It separates one from anything in the social life

into which the Master is not able to enter. This separates him from the use of all harmful drugs such as one finds in liquor and tobacco; from the dance; the card table and the theatre, which often debauch the body and degrade the mind.

One cannot imagine Jesus indulging in anything like the modern dance. A good rule in determining such matters is the prayer rule. Can one go on the dance floor and ask God's blessing on the twistings and contortions and questionable physical attitudes you are about to engage in? Another rule is the prayer meeting rule. Do people who do such things attend prayer meeting faithfully after a few months regular indulgence?

Again, it separates one from practices within the national life in which Christ is left out. Much as one loves his country, if the Christ is not master in politics, one must stay out. If Christ is not master, the Devil is. A Christian cannot follow Christ in other things and the Devil in politics and be pleasing to God. So for the present, until this is adjusted to the Master's standards, we just stay out. We don't love our country less. We just love God more. It is a bit hard, sometimes, and we often wonder if it wouldn't be best in some cases to step in and cast a vote for a good man.

But there comes the vision of the Master waiting sadly without the gate and we are content to stay out with Him until the gate is open to Him to come in and take charge. And we know that the people only dwell in happiness who take God to be their God and who say, 'Where thou dwellest I will dwell; where thou goest I will go; thy people shall be my people.' It is better so, for it is God's way for us and His way is best.

This process of indoctrination should not all be attempted before the new convert is brought into the Church. Most of it, in fact, should be done through the years after. And the only satisfactory way of doing it is the way which leaves the new Christian happy and contented in the Church. God's way for us is with the open Bible, seeking the portions which have a bearing on the case, always prayerfully, with an open mind to know the will of God better so one can be more obedient to the Master; always together as friends on a common basis. Follow this plan prayerfully,—always Spirit-filled—and you will seldom lose a convert. They will want to join your Church with you and will prefer to stay in it to the end. Strive to reach them by *families* as nearly as possible.