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ART. IV.—NOTES OF A MISSION TOUR IN AMERICA.

SECOND PAPER.[1]

PLEASANTLY situated on the southern bank of that noble river the Hudson, the little town of Newburgh rises on the view as you make your way up the river, leaving West-Point ten miles and New York sixty miles behind you. The place is very quiet and very respectable, and perhaps for an American town disposed to be a little sleepy. The Episcopal Church here dates from a period antecedent to the revolution; but here, as in several other places, it lost its favourable start by sympathizing with the Royalists in the great struggle for independence, and thus not only forfeited what would have been by this time splendid endowments, but ran a very near chance of being extinguished altogether. It was not the place that one would have deliberately chosen for the commencement of such an effort as we had come to America to make; and yet, I believe that this choice was wisely ordered in God's providence; for in commencing any spiritual work it is well to form at the beginning a just estimate of difficulties that will have to be faced and obstacles that must needs be surmounted before the work can be successful, and I know not where we could have gone with greater advantage to form such an estimate than to this very respectable and conservative little town. In no place that we visited did our work at one time come nearer proving a failure, while scarcely anywhere did we obtain more distinct encouragement in the end.

An intense prejudice against Revivalism and all its works, its methods and its aims, was the chief difficulty that had to be faced, and perhaps no wonder. I was assured that every winter, as regularly as the river froze and the ordinary traffic was thus for a time suspended, some of the denominations would open their buildings for revival meetings, and would use all sorts of means—some of them, it was said, of a very sensational character—to work up a revival. These regularly renewed paroxysms of religious fervour were usually followed by a season of reaction and deadness in which spiritual work was hardly expected, and in which spiritual life, in many cases, seemed to sink to a low ebb; and this state of things would continue until frost and fervour once again re-appeared at "the fall." The moral and religious results of this periodic revival system were gravely questioned by the sober-minded

[1] We have found that there is still much that Mr. Aitken could communicate to THE CHURCHMAN that we believe our readers would be interested in. We have therefore requested our esteemed friend to contribute a third paper.—ED.

and thoughtful. It was felt that such a system necessarily tends to induce a spasmodic type of spirituality, and to lead to a generally unhealthy tone of thought and action. Men learn to put off serious thought and go on living in gross sin, with the feeling more or less distinctly present to their mind that peradventure the winter revival may set things right by bringing about their conversion, and thus they become impervious to ordinary religious influences. Further, such observers could not fail to notice that sensational methods and really satisfactory results usually stand in inverse ratio to each other; and sometimes no doubt they would also be unfavourably impressed with the apparent connection between a loud profession and an inconsistent life.

I have seen something of this chronic Revivalism in days gone by in Cornwall, and I am bound to say that its effects are in my opinion such as to justify a very strong feeling against it; and most earnestly do I hope that the Mission movement in our Church will never be allowed to degenerate into anything of this kind. A Mission is designed to set things in motion and pave the way for steady Church work and spiritual progress; it would simply be disastrous if frequent Missions came to be regarded as a substitute for all this. In Cornwall, as in America, the abuse of Revivalism has brought about an intense prejudice against distinctive evangelizing work on the part of the clergy, and it is a curious fact that in this county, the headquarters of Methodism, in spite of the memory of Robert Aitken and the living influence of Bishop Wilkinson, Missions have been, I believe, less generally accepted than in any other diocese.

Against this kind of systematic Revivalism the Episcopal Church of America has been ever in standing protest, and perhaps with somewhat the same effect as I have observed in Cornwall; fanaticism has been no doubt discouraged, but spirituality has not been sufficiently insisted upon, and in too many cases Churchmen have evinced a disposition to regard fanaticism and spirituality as merely two names for the same thing. No Church in which and by which evangelizing work is not duly recognised and promoted, can long retain a high spiritual tone; for under such circumstances the unspiritual will ever be gaining upon the spiritual, and death, becoming more and more generally prevalent, will stifle what remains of life. It is just here that the American Church seemed to me to be weakest, and therefore I hope all the more from her adoption of the Mission movement.

As I have ventured to speak freely of the clergy of the Episcopal Church of America, to be consistent I ought to give my candid impressions of their flocks; and this seems to me

the proper place to do so ere I proceed further with my account of our first American Mission. There are several points in which I believe American congregations would contrast favourably with English. For example, the voluntary system tends to make laymen feel more distinctly that the church is their own "*cause*," and not merely the rector's. The existence of a representative body in the congregation possessed of considerable powers contributes to this feeling; and I think there are therefore a smaller number of persons in the congregation whose sole connection with it lies in the fact of "their sleeping there of a Sunday morning." Some years ago, a rich gentleman began to attend the ministry of a very energetic and somewhat gifted American clergyman in New York. He was soon observed, and by-and-by the rector paid him a visit and desired to know what work he proposed to undertake, or what causes he would support. "Oh dear," replied the man, not a little disgusted, "I thought when I came to a respectable congregation like yours, people would let me alone and not bother me with constant applications to be doing something, as they did in the last church I attended, which was a very poor one; and here you are at me already." "Oh, my dear sir," replied the facetious rector, "you have made an unfortunate mistake. 'The Church of the Heavenly Rest' is two blocks to the right. We haven't got as far as that yet in our church. No doubt you got *mixed* between the two buildings!" (I may add that I don't think this comfortable gentleman would fare any better to-day in the "Church of the Heavenly Rest" under its present *régime*.)

It almost surprises an English Churchman to notice how much interest American Churchmen will take in their congregation, and what responsibilities they will cheerfully accept when there is a possibility of making things a success. A clergyman, who, I ought to say, possessed no ordinary gifts, received a call from the vestry of a very large church in one of the great cities. For several reasons he did not wish to accept it, and named conditions which he thought it most unlikely that they would accept, for, owing to the old age and ill-health of the previous rector, things had completely run down and the church was nearly empty. The conditions involved a guarantee of £2,000 a year for the support of the clergy, besides a good deal more for church expenses; but it was further stipulated that the church should be absolutely free and open. The conditions were accepted without any hesitation. How many churches are there amongst us whose laymen would undertake a similar responsibility?

Another thing that struck me was the large proportion of the communicants to the congregation. One rector, whose

church would only seat a thousand, assured me that he had eight hundred communicants; and this was not the only case of the kind that came under my notice. Many of these "communicants," no doubt, only receive on Easter Day, and the changes of residence, so frequent in America, tend to swell the muster-roll without really increasing the actual numbers. But still the fact remains that the proportion of communicants to congregation is higher with them than with us. When we ask for an explanation of this, we notice, first, that the American Church is much less than ours the Church of the people. Amongst ourselves you will find ten communicants at Kensington or Belgravia among those who attend church for one at Stepney or Bow. It is a fashion with persons in a certain social grade to attend Holy Communion, and is equally the fashion with others in a lower grade, I know not why, not to do so. But there is a second reason which makes me doubt how far this large proportion of communicants is an altogether healthy sign. I frankly confess that I was not very favourably impressed with the spirituality of the tone of any congregation that I visited there, and one of the results of the prevalence of a low tone of spirituality will always be that criteria of this kind will mean much less than under other circumstances they would. Where a strongly spiritual tone prevails, people are disposed to judge themselves; and if they feel that their hearts are not right, to abstain from acts that seem in place only with the spiritual. But when spiritual distinctions are generally ignored, and public opinion draws no distinction between those who are Christians indeed and those who are Christians only in name, men cease to be affected by such considerations, and participate in Holy Communion with as little misgiving as they would feel in joining in the Litany.

Now, if I were asked what one characteristic of American church-folk most painfully impressed me, I should promptly reply, their *indefiniteness* in things spiritual. It certainly exceeded anything that I am familiar with in England, both in extent and degree, much though we have to complain of it amongst ourselves. Over and over again, in my endeavours to help individuals, I found myself quite at a loss to know whether the soul that I was dealing with was a true believer who had not grasped the full assurance of faith, or a mere formalist who had a name to live but was dead. By many of the clergy, whose spirituality I should be slow to question, not only is the idea of "sudden conversion" definitely discountenanced, but doubt is cast upon the certainty of any experience of justification; and the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins is not looked upon or

spoken of as being at all necessary to the spiritual life. A reactionary revolt against the hard-and-fast classifications of Methodism no doubt contributes to this state of things, but does not justify it, nor diminish the dangers that it brings in its train. We may not insist upon the accidents of justification; the blessing may be gained suddenly or dawn upon us gradually. We may be able to "name the day" or unable to name the year in which the change took place, but surely we should know whether or not it has taken place; and should learn from our spiritual teachers the real and very serious danger of going on in a state of uncertainty upon this point.

Perhaps it is the prevalence of this general indefiniteness that renders the distinction between true Christians and the world much less obvious than it is amongst us here, or at least causes it to be much less insisted upon. If it be asked, Are American Christians on the whole more worldly than English ones? the answer to the question must largely depend on what we understand by worldliness. It cannot be denied that they have less scruple than many amongst ourselves in participating in certain forms of social gaiety generally supposed by us to be worldly. But, on the other hand, an English friend of mine who has for some years been resident there went so far as to say, "They have a juster idea of worldliness than we in England have; they are really simpler, have less social pride, and much less worldly ambition than many Christian people at home, who would shrink with pious horror from a ball-room or a theatre." Well, to their own Master they stand or fall. I, at least, cannot presume to judge them, but I confess I find it difficult to understand how the theatre and the ball-room contrive to harmonize with the higher aspirations of the spiritual life.

Here, again, we are perhaps seeing a fruit of reaction. Amongst some of the denominations there is still a very strong feeling against "worldly amusements," and in years gone by it was much stronger than it is now. So it came to be a common saying that when people wanted to be religious, but would not give up the world, there was nothing for it but to fall back upon the Episcopal Church; and I have seen the same thing pretty plainly stated by a contemporary Methodist newspaper. Hence, in a curious way, an assertion of liberty from conventional religious restrictions in such matters has come to be regarded as a sign of good Churchmanship, and "strait-laced" notions as a remnant of Puritanism. Feeling strongly as I do that in our intercourse with the world we should avoid, as far as possible, countenancing those institutions which are specially infected by the world's spirit, I greatly regret that so many Christians in America should have

adopted the line that they do adopt on these points, nor can I think that the result is healthy. At the same time, in forming our conclusions in such a matter, we must make full allowance for the prevalence of a general sentiment, even in the religious world, less distinctly unfavourable to participation in what are sometimes, and I think rightly, called worldly amusements than usually obtains amongst us.

To return to Newburgh. Thin congregations and abhorrence of after-meetings were, to begin with, the order of the day. As for individuals, they simply declined our proffers of help, and several nights passed without our having an opportunity of conversing with a single awakened or inquiring soul. We were well through the first week before the ice began to break, and then we soon had our hands full. Prejudice yielded to conviction, and many who had hitherto thought themselves good church-folk began to comply with a direction which, I believe, gave great annoyance to some, when it was the text of my first sermon: "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." A happy thought of our rector, a man greatly and deservedly beloved by his flock, gave us an opportunity ere the Mission ended of seeing how prejudice had given way, and how deep a hold the Mission had taken upon the interests and sympathies of these dear people. (I use the word "dear" in no conventional sense, for I feel, as I write, as if Newburgh had a specially warm place in my heart's recollections.) He announced from the desk that, as he was sure his people would like to know me and my fellow-workers personally, he invited *the parish* to meet us in his house on the following Thursday afternoon. To English ears this form of invitation sounded rather alarming. What and if the whole parish should come? But "parish" in America means very much the same as "congregation" in England, and I think that the congregation was pretty well represented in that crowded gathering. I can never forget the warmth and cordiality with which we were greeted that afternoon by one and all, nor, what is far more important, the testimony received from one after another to the benefit that the Mission had proved to themselves or their friends. One of our party observed that this afternoon "tea" was one of the very best "after-meetings" she had ever attended.

Remarkably enough, as we finished our work here, Mr. Moody began his in a huge skating-rink hired for the purpose. I was curious to see whether this prophet has the honour in his own country that we rejoice to give him here in England, and so was very glad that the first meeting of his "Convention," falling on the Saturday succeeding our Mission, gave me an opportunity of meeting him. Yes; it was just the

same—all sorts of vehicles, respectable and grotesque, from all parts of the country crowding the streets; within the huge rink the same familiar sea of faces, the same air of intense and eager interest. I had heard some indistinct rumour that I was wanted to take some part in the meeting; but I was not at all prepared for the imperative order from this most masterful ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν—"I want you to take a clear hour!" But I have learnt with Mr. Moody that there is nothing for it but to obey, so after he had given a very characteristic address upon the Bible and Bible-reading, the "clear hour" had to be taken, and thus I bid Newburgh farewell.

I was glad Mr. Moody chose the subject he did, for I must confess that nothing gave me more painful surprise during my visit to the United States than the neglect of Bible study, even amongst Christian people. True, as a professor at one of the American universities said to me, "Mr. Moody speaks and thinks of the Bible as though it had fallen out of heaven in one volume, printed in Baxter's type according to the English version of 1611, and bound in black morocco, with flaps and gilt edges." But how much better this childlike, uncritical acceptance, coupled with an intense reverence for the Divine oracles and a full confidence in their capacity to make us wise unto salvation, than that superficial and not less uncritical depreciation of the Bible which is so prevalent amongst people who want to be thought abreast of the age, and nowhere more prevalent than in America! How far the one extreme of uncritical acceptance contributes to the other of uncritical depreciation is certainly an important question, and one deserving the very serious consideration of the orthodox of our day. But no harm can be done by showing as plainly and forcibly as possible that the Bible is to us a living book, speaking with a voice of authority such as no other book can pretend to, and claiming obedience where it communicates light; and no one shows this more plainly than D. L. Moody in his strong and trenchant utterances on this subject.

The secularizing of education throughout America renders the children and young people much less familiar with the letter of Scripture than our own at home; and this secular spirit shows a strong disposition to assert itself even in the Sunday-school. My friend and fellow-labourer, Mr. Stephens, in addressing his audiences of children and young people, found it quite impossible to elicit from them the answers about Scripture facts and familiar truths which rise in a shout from English audiences of a similar character, and yet the impression left upon his mind was that the American children are as a rule sharper and certainly much more precocious than ours. One lady teacher in one of the places we visited ob-

served, "We never open a Bible in our school. I have been teaching a considerable number of years, and I don't think I have ever seen a Bible-lesson given. What time we have for instruction after other things are done (and we haven't much) is always taken up with the Church Catechism." I noticed, too, that in several of the congregations that we visited, there were no such institutions as Bible-classes or Bible-readings of any kind in connection with the Church. That several such gatherings were started in consequence of the Missions held in various places I regard as amongst the most satisfactory results of these efforts.

On leaving Newburgh we found ourselves at work in Brooklyn, which is more a part of New York than Birkenhead is of Liverpool. Here, and in the next place we visited, the large manufacturing town of Newark, which also lies close to New York, our experiences were very similar to those I have already described. In each case the beginning was slow. Church-people at first stood aloof because our work savoured too much of the system of "the sects;" and "the sects" stood aloof because we were working for that "most exclusive" of all Protestant communities, the Episcopal Church. We had no hold upon the general population, because we were working for a small and not a very popular ecclesiastical body. We had but little hold to begin with upon that body, because its members were very conservative, and we seemed daring innovators. So in each case we had to win our way gradually, and only in the latter part of our Missions did their success become obvious and impressive.

An incident of the closing day of the Brooklyn Mission has left a very happy impression on my mind, and I think it likely to have an important influence upon the future of Mission-work yonder. On the second Saturday of our Mission, when it had been going on a week, my rector took me to pay my respects, as in duty bound, to the Bishop of Long Island at Garden City. Bishop Littlejohn has a name on this side of the water, and is, I believe, the only American Bishop that has ever held the office of special preacher at an English University. In his own country he has a considerable reputation as a theologian, and perhaps would be generally spoken of as belonging to the old-fashioned High-Church school. I asked him to come and be the celebrant at our closing Communion on the following Friday, but I did not gather from his reply that he was likely to be there. On the Thursday, however, I received an intimation from the Bishop that he had a message to deliver, and he would make a point of being present. He wished me to preach as usual, and then to give him a quarter of an hour for what he had to say. It appeared that during

the course of the week he had been present at a public meeting in which some of the clergy who did not sympathize with the Mission had referred to it in some utterances not distinguished by very good taste or very kindly feeling. The good Bishop went home stirred in spirit. He felt he must speak out; and, as he told me afterwards, though he had much else in hand, he put it all aside, and sat up till after midnight writing a sort of Episcopal manifesto upon the subject of Missions. This he delivered with much force and fire on the morning in question, having prefaced his written remarks by a most cordial reference to the sermon which he had just heard. This paper was afterwards printed in the American *Churchman*, and I suppose it must have been read from one end of the States to the other, carrying all the more weight from the known character and views of the man.

At the luncheon-table afterwards I saw that the Bishop—a man of placid habit, who rarely betrayed any kind of emotion—was a good deal moved; and very deeply interested was I in finding that this Mission had come upon him "like a long-forgotten strain" wafted from some of the happiest ministerial experiences of his bygone life. "During the great American revival, as it was called," he said, "I was the rector of an important church at Newhaven" (I suppose this would be about the year '57). "Unfortunately, most of our Episcopal clergy stood aloof from that movement, but the more I saw and heard of it the more I felt it was the work of God, and that we ought to throw ourselves into it, and endeavour to direct and shape it wisely and soberly. I opened my church-room for special evangelizing gatherings, but soon we were crowded out of that, and had to adjourn to the church. I had no one to help me, and for several weeks I went on preaching three and four times a day, until at last my voice entirely gave way, and after several ineffectual efforts to get assistance, I had to bring the services very reluctantly to a close, but not before a most deep and permanent impression had been produced upon the hearts and minds of many of my people." I was much interested and touched at this testimony, and by the way in which it was given. Here was a man who would be regarded as the soberest of sober Churchmen, and who, the first time I saw him, had been eloquent upon the dangers of the revival system. Yet thirty years ago he had had courage and breadth enough to recognise and make good use of all that was best in a great revival movement with which his own body would then have nothing to do, and God had spared him to see that being done in the American Church at large which he had had the enterprise and the foresight to attempt thirty years before in his own single congregation.

In speaking of Bishop Littlejohn and my visit to him, I have incidentally mentioned Garden City and its cathedral. It is not quite the only building connected with the Episcopal Church in America that bears the name of cathedral, but it may perhaps be regarded as the building most deserving of the title so far as appearances go; and I think it very probable indeed that within a decade or two something like an English cathedral corporation and an English cathedral city will have been reproduced here. The cathedral owes its existence to the munificence of a lady, the widow of the late millionnaire Stewart, whose body lies (or is believed to lie) in the cathedral crypt. A very heavy sum has been expended in raising this structure, which, however, is not large; on the whole the effect is successful. Much of the detail work is very elaborate and conscientious, and no expense had been spared in carrying out the architect's designs. We are reminded, however, that we are in America by the substitution of metal pillars (I believe they are bronze) for marble in the aisles, and more agreeably by the presence of an organ that is a perfect marvel of mechanism, which is, indeed, five organs connected by one set of key-boards, one being situated in the crypt, and one in the tower, and one in the roof, if I remember rightly. But there these buildings stand—an accomplished fact—a genuine cathedral, with a Bishop's house (I suppose I must not call it a palace), and, contiguous, a very large public school conducted on Church principles, and destined, if my predictions are worth anything, to become one of the most important educational centres in the land.

Will the cathedral system ever take root in America? Dr. Phillips Brooks says, "No. It isn't American, and the conditions which created it in England are wanting here." I am not so sure of this; but I do feel very certain of one thing, that if they ever develop anything of the kind, it will be so practically and sensibly done, that it will be a real source of strength to them where it is often a source of weakness to us. It will not be necessary for any future Dean of an American cathedral to spend ten years in endeavouring to discover the duties of his office, as one of ours is said to have affirmed that he had done without any success. We shall never see there a number of respectable elderly gentlemen, otherwise unknown to fame, gathered round the precincts of some imposing edifice, with no greater responsibility resting upon them in virtue of their office than an obligation to preach one dry sermon in a week and to read the lessons at daily prayers, and to draw a thousand a year for doing so. Dignified ecclesiastical sinecures will never commend themselves to the practical

common-sense of America, and it will be well for us when we cease as a Church to sanction them.

But cathedral offices need not be sinecures, and peradventure while we are appointing Commissioners and talking about what ought to be, leaving everything in the meanwhile just exactly as it was, these *go-ahead* people in America may actually evolve a rational cathedral system before our eyes. One thing is clear, they would be much the better for some definite provision such as our cathedral system ought, if rightly worked, to supply, for the maintenance of men of literary eminence and erudition in posts in which they may exercise their special talents without being overburdened with parochial responsibilities, or, on the other hand (as in universities), losing touch altogether of the practical work and life of the Church. The tendency of the elective system in America, as in Ireland, is to exclude men of distinguished learning and literary ability from the Episcopate, in favour of men who have proved themselves successful parish priests. This may not be altogether a disadvantage, for there is no reason in the nature of things why a student exhumed from an erudite sepulture within college cloisters should suddenly blossom forth into an able administrator or a popular orator; but every church must need some *locus standi* for men of real learning in her organization, and the cathedral system, properly worked, should offer this.

Not less do we need men of activity at headquarters in each diocese, who will take the lead in various branches of Church work, and act as a kind of staff around the Episcopal general. It is in this form, I think, that the cathedral system is most likely to commend itself, at first at any rate, to the practical American mind; and perhaps, if the Mission movement becomes as popular in the Episcopal Church as I hope it may, *Diocesan Mission* Canons, charged with the superintendence of Mission work in their dioceses, may begin to appear amongst them as they are already appearing amongst us.

Certain it is, from what Americans have done and are doing, that a development of this kind might take place with great rapidity. We on this side inherit the accumulated wealth of ages; they have had to do everything themselves, and it is astonishing to think of what they have done. Their magnificent country, with its boundless resources, is compensation for much that the ages have given us, and they are by no means ignorant of their advantages in this respect. At Newark, on the national Thanksgiving Day, I had the pleasure of hearing the rector, a man of noted eloquence, deliver an oration rather than a sermon on the words, "All that I have is thine;" and his object

was to stimulate grateful feelings and a sense of responsibility by showing that the United States possessed about every material, political, and social blessing that the great Father could bestow. It was unfortunate for this application of the text that the words were spoken to the *elder* brother (!) But the preacher was right; they already have their endowments yonder in one great endowment: it only remains for them to turn their wealth into cash.

I cannot take leave of Garden City and its cathedral establishment without saying a word or two about the magnificent school which the same munificent benefactress has erected hard by, and in full connection with it. My friend Mr. Van-de-Water, the rector of the church in Brooklyn in which I was holding my Mission, regards the creation of this great public school in connection with the Episcopal Church as one of the most important and promising features of her development. The school system in America is curiously different from ours, and I do not think that the difference is to their advantage. Public schools in our sense of the word do not exist. A public school with them means what we should call an elementary school. The nearest approach to anything like an English public school that they have is the University, to which boys are admitted at such an early age that you are reminded rather of the upper forms of Harrow and Rugby than of University life in Oxford or Cambridge, in what you see there. I noticed at Yale College that the professors all spoke of the students as "boys;" I never once heard the word "men" used of them. In preparation for the University private schools are the order of the day, and these depend for their success entirely upon the capacity and repute of the head-master and proprietor. The experiment, then, of establishing something like a great public school in connection with an Episcopal cathedral, and with a distinct Church tone, will be watched with the greatest interest all over the States, and may lead to a gradual revolution in their educational methods. The school has only just been opened, but already it is a splendid success, and I shall not be surprised to hear in the course of a few years that its numbers have risen from one hundred to five hundred. The arrangements are as nearly perfect as possible. Every boy has a separate room, and not a very small one, entirely to himself, and they all open out into long corridors carefully warmed and ventilated. The military system of discipline common in American schools is maintained, which, though it is not very much in harmony with an Englishman's ideas and prejudices, is said to work extremely well. All the boys wear uniform, and the school itself is a sort of regiment with its officers and

privates, all alike under strict discipline. The masters have nothing to do with the discipline of the school; they are simply "friends who teach." If a boy offends they report him to his military superior, and he is duly court-martialled, and punished accordingly. It seems all very funny to an Englishman, but I believe it works exceedingly well, and undoubtedly there is in this school a really earnest effort being made to bring a good religious and pure moral influence to bear upon the boys of the upper classes, and to make them both true Christians and good Churchmen.

The New York Mission followed upon the heels of our work at Newark. Our post was St. George's Church, where the vicar was an Englishman, and one who had had much to do with bringing the general Mission about. Himself a distinguished Mission preacher, the Rev. W. Rainsford spared no pains to make the Mission a success in every sense of the word. A surpliced choir of about fifty men and boys, assisted by an equal number of ladies, led the singing, while a large band of willing labourers beat up the neighbourhood around, the houses of the wealthy as well as the lodgings of the poor. The Mission was thoroughly well worked, and I believe that the labourers were rewarded by a season of real and widely extended blessing. St. George's Church is one of the largest in New York, and also one of the best attended. It is entirely free and open, and yet boasts an abundant income. The system by which this desirable state of things is brought about is worth describing, as I am not aware that it prevails in any church amongst us.

As soon as anyone joins the congregation he is waited on by one of the vestrymen, and politely asked what he intends to contribute to the support of the church. I believe he is only asked to name an approximate sum, and that he enters into no such distinct obligation as is implied in an annual subscription. He is then supplied with fifty-two small envelopes for the year, and is asked to place his regular contribution in the collecting plate at the offertory, enclosed in one of the envelopes; whatever he desires to give to other specific objects he can place in the plate not under cover. The treasurer for the church and, I think, one other gentleman keep a careful account of all the moneys thus received, and of the number of the envelopes through which they come, for each set of envelopes has its own special number. They know, therefore, exactly what each person contributes, but no one else does, for the book is not seen by any other eyes. I am afraid to state the sum that is received through these envelopes, but I know the amount greatly surprised me. I do not think anything like so much would have been obtained from letting

pews, and besides this large amounts were collected from time to time for special objects.

Both here and in other churches all over America we found ourselves at a disadvantage in our Mission work yonder, from a cause that does not operate, at any rate to anything like the same extent, amongst ourselves at home. It is a curious fact that Sunday-evening services are unfrequent, unfashionable, and, when they are held, usually ill-attended in America. At St. George's Church, on the first Sunday of the Mission, we were crowded in the morning service, and, judging from the analogies of London, one should have expected to see crowds turned from the doors in the evening. This has happened repeatedly in Mission services that I have held, even in the most fashionable parts of London. But at St. George's as a rule the evening service is a Mission service, with a short irregular liturgical element, and a good deal, I suppose, that is extempore; and this is usually attended by five or six hundred, in a church in which about seventeen hundred will gather in the morning. It was thought very satisfactory that the body of the church was filled the first Sunday evening, but the galleries were not even opened. It is easy to see how great a disadvantage a Mission labours under when it gets no fair start on the first Sunday night. But such are the habits of the people, and really I am quite unable to say whether this arises from their being behind us or in advance of us. Is it that with their usual conservatism they are just emerging from where we were seventy years ago, in the days when Charles Simeon created almost a riot, and was mobbed by undergraduates for holding an evening service? or is it that they are already where we are to be in the twentieth century, when the triumphant body shall have dictated its terms finally to the soul, and bid it master its appetite as best it may, and not interfere with the imperious claims of the eight o'clock dinner? I know not. I only know this American peculiarity is somewhat hard upon Missions and Missioners! A similar strong indisposition to turn out at night hampers and checks all week-night parochial work. Our very earnest and active rector at Brooklyn assured me that it would be simply futile to attempt following up the Mission by week-evening meetings of any sort or kind. The habits of the people, he asserted, were thoroughly opposed to anything of the kind, and you might as well turn back Niagara as attempt to alter them. As a matter of fact, in that otherwise well-worked church, I think I am right in saying that from Monday morning to Saturday night it never occurred to them to hold regularly any single religious meeting or service of a congregational character. It was no use trying; people would not come.

Probably the feature of the Advent Mission at New York that excited the most general interest was the series of services for business men at old Trinity Church. Old Trinity is the mother-church of New York; in an English town we should call it the old parish church. After the Revolution, although it always, I believe, sided with the Royalists, it was, by a rare act of generosity, allowed to retain the royal farm with which Queen Anne had endowed it. It has to-day, I suppose, the largest endowment of any church in the world. I have heard the sum variously estimated at seventy, eighty, and a hundred thousand pounds per annum, which of course is not all spent upon that single church, but supports several daughter churches. The church still retains in New York something of the prestige which with us belongs to the old parish churches of our big towns. A committee of laymen was formed to promote these gatherings of business men, and with much painstaking care they made all the necessary preparations. But I think we were perhaps more indebted to Dr. Douglas, the assistant-minister at Trinity, than to anyone else for the success of the meetings, from the very first, in point of numbers. He did, I think, everything that could be done, and represented in his friendly activities the cordial sympathy and goodwill of Dr. Dix, the rector of the parish.

I had heard much of the extreme tension of business life in New York, and that men were so pushed all day long that it would probably be far more difficult to secure a congregation there than in London. Besides, while I may be pretty well known here, in New York I was a perfect stranger. I must say, then, that it was a very agreeable surprise to me when, on entering the great church on the first Monday of the Mission, I found it nearly full, and ere I gave my text there were already some standing round the door. I have conducted similar services in London and in most large towns of England, but I shall always look back upon these gatherings at Trinity as the most interesting and apparently successful I have ever held. The interest went on increasing from day to day, until choir and aisles and every other available part of the building were crowded with a congregation of men only, and mostly of *bonâ-fide* business men. So general was the interest excited that it was decided that we must go on another (*i.e.*, a third) week, chiefly at the suggestion (or shall I say the command?) of D. L. Moody, who suddenly appeared on the scene, greatly rejoicing at this success. He observed to me, with much emphasis, "You are probably doing the greatest work of your life, *right here*, now."

Well, "the day will declare," and it will never be known till then what the Lord may have been pleased to do through

those services. After-meetings were, of course, out of the question, and only a few of those who heard me at Trinity could follow me to St. George's. But I cannot doubt that out of that crowd of eager faces not a few received a message of life.

The last service was a most impressive one; Bishop Potter attended, and spoke in very cordial terms of the work; after which, in the course of my closing address, I read a most affecting letter from a business man, detailing some of the special temptations of business life, arising from the habit of making it the duty of the younger men connected with certain firms to "*entertain*" big customers from the country on their occasional visits to town. The writer gave a really ghastly list of tragic consequences that he knew to have been due to this arrangement, mentioning (without names) some twenty acquaintances of his, who had been amongst the flower of New York commercial men, and none of whom had received a smaller income than £1,000 a year, but who had all gone to ruin, owing to habits of sin formed by "entertaining customers," a process that usually began with a champagne supper, proceeded with a visit to the theatre, and concluded at the house of ill-fame. Greatly was that vast congregation stirred by these terrible statements, the more impressive because of their evident truthfulness and sincerity; and few eyes were dry as the writer closed in some such words as these: "You ask, perhaps, how have you then escaped? I have not escaped! Prematurely old, with a shattered constitution and a blighted life, I linger out what remains, trying to find comfort in the thought of God's pardoning mercy, hoping to join by-and-by my dear father and mother, who are waiting for me yonder."

Thus this most interesting series of gatherings came to its close amidst expressions of warm and friendly feelings that were almost overpowering to their recipient. For Americans are certainly more demonstrative than we are, and I like them none the worse for it. I think the preacher must have been quite twenty minutes in making his way from the pulpit to the vestry, so many gathered round to press his hand and utter words of thanks and fervent good wishes. I do not know how soon they will forget my words, but it will be long indeed before I forget their friendly cordiality and sympathetic enthusiasm.

W. Hay M. H. Aitken.

(*To be continued.*)