

THE PACIFIC COMMERCIAL ADVERTISER

WALTER G. SMITH : : : : : EDITOR.

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FEAR AND HYPNOTISM IN REVIVALS.

The Literary Digest, discussing the recent outbreak of religious revivals at home and abroad, draws upon a recent essay on "sociological interpretation" of revivals by Prof. Davenport of Hamilton College. "Probably many of Prof. Davenport's fellow Methodists," it says, "will differ with him pretty radically in his view of the means by which so many have found an entrance to the Methodist fold, and many of the converts will think the revival more valuable than it appears to him." His interpretation, entitled "Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals" is given in "terms of law and personality" and in his analysis of the phenomena the writer discriminates two modes by which the skillful revivalist, in more remote as well as in recent times, has secured the success of his efforts. These are the appeal to fear and the use of hypnotic suggestion. Of the former the author writes:

"The appeal to fear in the revivals of the past has been based upon two forms of this dread emotion. There has been the fear of retribution for sin, produced by the preacher in vivid imaginative pictures of a hell of endless torment and of endless remorse. There is also in the average man a great slumbering mass of fear that he can not shake off, made up of instincts and feelings inherited from a long human and animal past. This can be awakened in ways that every psychologist understands theoretically and that the skillful revivalist employs practically. Under conditions which will bring men together, sharply arrest their attention, fix their minds upon issues of the gravest import for time and for eternity and distinctly discourage all critical thought—under these conditions men will be governed chiefly by their feelings, and their action, in general, will be reflex and impulsive rather than deliberative. That is, for the time being, their mental make-up will revert to the primitive type. With few exceptions, each individual's power of inhibition will be swallowed up in the maelstrom, and every wave of emotion, whether of fear or of joy, will sweep the major portion of the audience with it."

"The employment of irrational fear which played so large a part in earlier revivals has largely passed away," the author declares; "but the employment of the hypnotic method has not." One of the secrets of the late Dwight L. Moody's success in the field of pure revivalism, he avers, was "his past-mastership in the art of hypnotism." As to its present-day employment he says:

"There has rather been a recrudescence and a conscious strengthening of it because the old prop of terror is gone. And it can not be too vigorously emphasized that such a form of influence is not a 'spiritual' force in any high or clear sense at all, but is rather uncanny and psychic and obscure. And the method itself needs to be greatly refined before it can ever be of any spiritual benefit whatever. It is thoroughly primitive and belongs with the animal and instinctive means of fascination. In this bald, crude form the feline employs it upon the helpless bird and the Indian medicine-man upon the ghost-dance votary. When used, as it has often been, upon little children who are naturally highly suggestible, it has no justification whatever and is mentally and morally injurious in the highest degree. I do not see how violent emotional throes and the use of the art of suggestion in its crude form can be made serviceable even in the case of hardened sinners, and certainly with large classes of the population the employment of this means is nothing but psychological malpractice. We guard with intelligent care against quackery in physiological obstetrics. It would be well if a sterner training and prohibition hedged about the spiritual obstetrician, whose function it is to guide the far more delicate psychological process of the new birth."

Impulsive self-surrender as opposed to deliberative self-devotion is, in the opinion of the writer, one of the fundamental defects in the old-time revival method. Upon this point he continues:

"The emotional revival has never taken into account the proper function of the will in conversion. Emphasis has been most unfortunately laid upon impulsive and mystical self-surrender. Men and women have been urged to become as 'drift logs on the current of divine purpose,' as 'nothing in the floods and water-spouts of God.' They must 'surrender all,' their intellects, their talents, their social pleasures. . . . The suggestion of abject surrender has been potent in professed conversions just because it fits so beautifully a type of mind that is very common in every population. There are large numbers of persons whose rational and volitional processes are so imperfectly under control that when they attempt to use them in time of religious storm and stress, or at any other time of great emotional agitation for that matter, they fail utterly. . . . The lower cerebral processes will not work in harness with the higher. It is only when they cease to think and cease to will and cast themselves unreservedly into the current of the subconscious and the mystical in their natures that they find relief. And your professional revivalist, though not a trained psychologist, has had a very practical experience with the mental life of congregations. He knows what his crude methods will accomplish with this type. A suggestion of the impotence of the human will, of the power that comes through complete surrender, an explosion of the ice-jam at the heart through the dynamite of emotion, and you get your result. . . ."

"Candid investigation will compel a true bill against the revival of the past on the evidence of its having violated the fundamental principles of education. Its normal tendency is not to strengthen the intellect and the will, but rather to submerge both under billows of suggestion and emotion. It is a thing of impulse rather than of reason. When allowed full sway in a population, its manifestations become primitive and ultimately so gruesome and grotesque that they can no longer be associated in the thought of earnest man with soundness of method or of mind. Whenever in the past, as has sometimes happened, genuine good has been done in society through the revival, it has been directly in proportion to the control which the reflective processes of individual leaders have exercised over what is essentially impulsive social action."

The place of the old revival will be taken by the "new evangelism" which the same author, in an article contributed to The Outlook (April 18), defines as an effort which "contemplates first of all a program of Christian nurture, the cultivation of a form of conversion which manifests itself, not in crises, but in the normal evolution of character." In this form of evangelism the religious impulse is recognized as the climax of the social impulse. And while the awakening of the God-consciousness should not be unduly hastened in the child, "no man may say how early it will appear under the simple rational nurture of an intelligent Christian home." Recognizing the existence of a large class, not thus provided for, the writer continues:

"But what of that multitude who for generations to come because of unwise parenthood and imperfect methods, or sheer wilfulness, or some other cause, will continue to pass out of the home and out of the church of childhood and youth into adult maturity without God and without hope, and perhaps without love to man? Are the days of 'crowd' evangelism altogether done? I do not so believe. But the emphasis of preaching and the manner of winning men to a more normal and rational life will undergo modification. The new evangelism will speak less of the soul's depravity and more of its infinite worth. There are a few instinctive criminals in society whose heredity and environment have left them very little of the image of God. But we shall not allow their existence to determine the content of religious doctrine. The appeal to fear, that central prop of the old revivalism, will be employed no more. Side by side, however, with the preaching and the teaching of the love of a heavenly Father, there will be clear emphasis upon the essential justice of the universe and of law and of God—that punishment does not await the verdict of an eternal assize, but that every hour of his life a man is at the judgment-seat, and every day he lays up penalty in character."

Enquest may stay in Manila bay and be interned or sail out to meet Uriu and be interned.

LAST WEEK OF KILOHANA EXHIBIT

Lahaina seems to have been the favorite sketching ground for Art League exhibitors this season. The largest canvases representing a scene there is one by Mrs. Frances Storan Molony, in oils, and lends an air of importance to the waterfront quite flattering to the present appearance of our ancient capital. Much careful work is here represented, and Mrs. Molony has two other large canvases which will bear study, one of them in its vague browns being especially strong in feeling. The other Lahaina scenes are represented by Mrs. Helen Kelley, Miss A. H. Parke, Miss Alexander and Mr. Dodge. Some small bits of Mrs. Kelley's taken from the partly ruined buildings are most suitably framed and original in their setting. They have quite an old-world air about them, though found quite tucked away in this corner of the new world. The field is varied in that picturesque part of Maui, as the following titles indicate: 48, "South Sea Islander's Home," by P. H. Dodge; 53, "A Glimpse of Lanai," by Miss Parke; 52, "Old Brick Oven," and 39, "Old Richards House," by Mrs. Kelley; 76, "Morning at Lahaina," by Miss Alexander; as well as many others depicting our island charms.

One feature of the exhibition is the architectural work of five pieces in plaster of Mr. J. Rosenstein, which shows great technical ability and artistic execution. His "Study of Mangoes," 31, brings us back to Hawaiian modelling, and one is tempted to visit the studio of Mr. Rosenstein in the Progress block, where he is imparting to students the knowledge which may produce results like those here shown. The work of Mr. F. W. Schultz is varied and in large numbers, in oil, water color, pencil and ink, not only upon the walls but in the portfolios. Beside the evidences of ability of this artist to depict animal figures, there are glimpses of scenes abroad treated in an attractive manner, and there is much to be admired which was gleaned in his recent sojourn in the vicinity of the volcano. A bit of fern forest shows delightful certainty of the handling. In his portfolio are characteristic book plates and other drawings of great interest.

The portfolios, which were so well patronized last season, are especially interesting at this time. Miss Parke has one well filled with island bits and there have strayed over here a few leaves from the work of Mr. Mist in Dresden. In the portfolio of Mr. Dodge is a collection of sea and cloud scenes, in which, perhaps, his most successful work is depicted.

Mrs. Pierre Jones is represented in 68 by one of her most original and attractive productions, and Mrs. Focke contributes in 35 a refreshing sketch in Italy. A name which appears for the first time is that of W. H. Fenton-Smith; represented by one number also is Miss Bessie Browne, in a Canadian scene. The three young artists, Cordella Gilman, Eileen McCarthy and Alice Spalding, are doing themselves credit both in flowers and landscape, and between them have contributed nine numbers.

The miniature by Miss Nettie King, 61, will draw the especial attention of those who are wise in that delicate line of art. The likeness is not to be mistaken, and one wonders that form, flesh tone and grace may be so delicately rendered.

We speak last of those two glimpses from California which have come from the brush of Mr. H. C. Best, whose work is well known to some of our townsmen. They are greatly admired, and the larger of the two, the only one which was for sale, early bore a card indicating that it had been purchased by a Honolulu admirer. It is a pleasure to have a suggestion of California sunshine between the trunks of the giant redwood and these canvases add quite a dignity to the present exhibition.

The pages of the visitors' book are being slowly filled, and the public may avail themselves of what the exhibition affords through the remaining days and evenings of this week.

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