

THE SOUL-DIRGE.

BY THE RT. REV. A. CLEVELAND COXE, D.D.



HE organ played sweet music
While, as on Easter-day,
All heartless from the altar
The heedless went away;
And down the broad aisle crowding,
They seemed a funeral train,
That were burying their spirits
To the music of that strain.

As I listened to the organ
And saw them crowd along,
I thought I heard two voices,
Speaking strangely, but not strong;
And one, it whispered sadly,
Will ye also go away?
But the other spoke exulting,
Ha! the soul-dirge,—hear it play!

Hear the soul-dirge! hear the soul-dirge!
It was dread to hear it play,
While the tamishing went crowding
From the Bread of Life away;
They were bidden, they were bidden
To their Father's festal board;
But they all, with gleeful faces,
Turned their backs upon the Lord.

Oh, the soul-dirge, how it echoed
The empty aisles along,
As the open street grew crowded
With the full outpouring throng!
And then—again the voices;
Ha! the soul-dirge! hear it play!
And the pensive, pensive whisper,
Will ye also go away?

Few, few were they that lingered
To sup with Jesus there;
And yet, for all that spurned Him,
There was plenty and to spare!
And now, the food of angels
Uncovered to my sight,
All-glorious was the altar,
And the chalice glittered bright.

I may not tell the rapture
Of a banquet so divine;
Ho! every one that thirsteth,
Let him taste the bread and wine!
Hear the Bride and Spirit saying,
Will ye also go away?
Or—go, poor soul, forever!
Oh! the soul-dirge—hear it play!

THE *Indian Churchman* says: "It is quite unreasonable to judge of the success or failure of missions in Calcutta simply by the number of converts. In mission work there is a time for ploughing, and a time for sowing, and a time for reaping. The present is not a time for reaping in Calcutta. It has, no doubt, surprised many people to see the apparent want of success of the Oxford Mission. They have been at work now for six years, and yet scarcely a convert has been made from among the more educated classes. Yet it would be most unreasonable to assert that therefore their work has failed. What they have done is to produce a very real and deep impression on public opinion as a whole. They have conciliated prejudice, bridged over the widening gulf between native and European, and given to those with whom they have come in contact a higher idea of the self-denial of Christian life. The reality of this work has been

very clearly seen in the general sympathy and genuine sorrow expressed by the students, the leaders of the Brahmo Somajes, and the most influential portion of the native press, for the death of the Rev. P. S. Smith. During the four years he was working in Calcutta he hardly baptized a single convert, and yet it is evident that his work and character has exerted a very great influence for good upon a large section of the educated natives of Calcutta. It would be absurd to call his work a failure, because it cannot be measured by statistics. He has sown that others may reap. There are at present reasons why missionaries and their supporters should not look for any immediate fruits of their labors, but should be content to work patiently on, and leave the issue in the hands of God.

THE spirit of Indifferentism is abroad in the Church. What we do to save the heathen at home or abroad is done by proxy. We substitute missionaries and money for our own individual personal effort. Voluntary societies acting for the Church take the place of the whole Church. Out of some thirty million Protestant Church members and over one hundred million adherents, some five thousand laborers, male and female, go to foreign shores, and we give them a meagre support and are content: we are evangelizing the heathen! But what if these ('apostles') were providentially shut up in some Jerusalem, where are the multitudes of believers? In their workshops and counting houses, in the marts of commerce and at their professional employments; but absorbed in their own business. If to-day the one hundred missionary societies with their five thousand missionaries and their native helpers were caught away from earth by a sudden rapture, and with them a few faithful souls who are working in their quiet way to save the lost, the Church of God would be left destitute of laborers.

Oh, for some Luther or Wesley to sound the trumpet of this new Reformation! to provoke to love and good works a torpid, listless Church. The Scriptural idea and ideal is a whole body of believers at work for souls; universal activity and world-wide Evangelism. Every believer must be a preacher, witness, herald. It took a whole Christ to redeem, it will take a whole Church filled with the Holy Ghost to evangelize the world. The great commission, addressed to every believer, must be so regarded and accepted by every believer. SERVICE must be emblazoned on our banners and become our watchword; the work is world-wide, there is a place for every child of God to work, according to the measure of his ability; and only he who heeds this call from God to personal labor to save lost souls is faithful to his stewardship!—*The Missionary Review*.

The true Christian's thought is not "How little?" but "How much?" Instead of "How much can I afford?" the thought should be "How much can I spare?"