

there is work to be done. They differ in regard to the sphere of their activity and the motives prompting it. The first class is zealous in attending to the outside of the cup and platter. Externals absorb all their attention. The financial prosperity of the congregation, the elegance and comfort which they deem essential to a place of worship, increase of membership, the increased liberality of the people, and, rising from the congregation to the Church at large, the extension of its influence and the development of its resources, find in them willing and able advocates. Such elders as these are exceedingly useful; the Church could not well do without them. And yet, after all, much of their work is that which should, as far at least as the congregation is concerned, fall to other hands than those of men ordained to the oversight of souls. There is a more excellent way. The motives that prompt to activity in the mere externals of our religious worship may be perfectly pure. Exclusive attention to these, however, is not favorable to the maintenance of such purity of motive in one who has been set apart for work of a higher character. He is the true elder who, chosen for his piety and gifts to edification, is zealous for the welfare of the souls committed to his care, and who makes all other official duties subordinate to the one great end of promoting the spiritual life of the people among whom he ministers. There is other necessary work to be performed in connection with every congregation, and for the good of the Church at large, but this is the one great work of the elder. There is no need to fence such a definition of an elder's duties with stipulations as to motives. The end sought declares the motive. Worldlings may not understand, and may affect to call in question the secret springs of action that lead any body of Christian men to take an interest in the spiritual well-being of their fellows. They may find the ground from which these springs rise to be superstitious and fanatical, according to their own indiscriminating and uncharitable jargon of words and phrases; but they cannot deny that the motive itself is one of love to man's highest nature, in obedience to a divine law that itself constrains by a still higher power of love.

Alas! how very few in the eldership come up to the true standard of their official requirements! How many a faithful pastor finds in his Session a useless encumbrance, rather than a body of earnest and active fellow-laborers! Yet, how often does the blame lie at the minister's own door, who, seeing to train and lead forward the people of his congregation as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, does not at the same time seek the aid of those who are the rightly constituted officers under him. "And it shall be when the officers have made an end of speaking unto the people, that they shall make captains of the armies to lead the people." The elders are captains in God's host; and when throughout the Church we find them all, as many now are, amid many trials and discouragements, standing at their posts, the ark may set forward to the sure words of Moses' psalm, "Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee."

Missionary Intelligence.

FREE CHURCH MISSIONS.

The following cheering statement appeared in the September number of the *Record* of the Free Church:—

"In last number of the *Record* reference was made to the baptism of a pupil of the Institution at Puna under interesting circumstances. More