

THE CHURCH'S TRIUMPH.

T. H. BLONUS.

Age after age has passed away, mighty cities with their proud monuments and palaces have crumbled to dust, empires, kingdoms and thrones have arisen and successively followed each other into the mouldering scenes of the past. The incessant gnawing of the tooth of time has brought to destruction the polished shaft and stately tower. The crushing weight of accumulated centuries has been wheeled over the sepulchre of buried magnificence. The nations of the earth have gazed and wondered much, while the thoughtful, with concern and anxiety, have often enquired, What will become of the fabric of the church of Christ in the midst of these mighty transformations? But they have ever hailed the fact, that stone upon stone, and story upon story, the glorious building has been ever rising toward the grand and final completion.

What can Satan invent in the future that his rage and determination have not tried in the past? All his hellish powers and infernal activity have been laid under the most constant and unremitting contribution to destroy this blessed city of refuge, but in the midst of it all, like the Hebrews in the land of their enemies, the more the church has been opposed and oppressed the more rapidly has she gained strength, disseminated the seeds of saving truth and multiplied her hosts. Like the sturdy oak, with its thousand roots and branches, the more it has been disturbed and shaken by the onset of adverse winds and beating storms the deeper has its hold been, and its grasp strengthened in the hearts of the nations, until to day she lifts her stately head and promises soon to extend her ever-widening, protecting and sheltering influence over every corner of the habitable globe. She stands in the earth to-day the queen-orb in the constellation of nations, and, like the star of Bethlehem, points to the redemption and regeneration of the world. Who can properly estimate the blessing the church has been to this benighted world? Strike it out of existence and it would be far more disastrous to the human family than if the natural sun were eliminated from his place in the sky. Moral gloom, only faintly represented by the raven wings which hung around the land of Goshen, would be the inevitable and endless consequence. Then

" Ah, whither could we flee for aid,
When tempted, desolate, dismayed,
Or how the hosts of hell defeat
Had suffering souls no mercy-seat."

But let us "lift up the hands which hang down," and fling to the winds our needless fears, for God, who has founded the church and made it the place of his own abode, has promised, "that of her increase there shall be no end."

The danger to the church does not arise from a want of numbers, nor for a want of facilities, or divine resources. Her chief danger arises from a spirit of indifference. The giant does not lack strength for his sure defense, but he needs to exert himself upon his foes. When was it that Sampson was shorn of his power? Was it while he was contending with his enemies in a hand to hand conflict? No, this only served to make even more iron-like the muscles of his strong arms. He lost his strength while unconscious upon the lap of the deceitful Delilah. So the church may become careless, under a conscious sense of her own mighty resources, and thus, while at least partially slumbering, her foes are forging chains, with which they

hope to bind and lead her into a strange land of captivity. The battle against the church has been waging along the ages with various apparent results. Many well-fought fields have already been passed, and the strength of Zion still remains, and her munitions of war are not exhausted. Even now she seems to be "coming up out of the wilderness leaning upon the arm of her beloved, clear as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners." There may be many battles yet to fight, many more victories yet to win; but in order to final conquest and glorious triumph, she must be watchful, active and diligent, exert the strength which God supplies, keep clean her beautiful garments, and overwhelming defeat will be visited on every foe. Beholding afar the final triumph of the church, a prophet of God has swept the chords of the prophetic lyre and we hear these blessed words, "The mountain of the Lord's home shall be established upon the top of the mountains, and shall be elevated above the hills, and all nations shall flow into it." We are in the midst of this grand fulfillment. There is a moving among the nations, and men and women are coming from every quarter of the globe seeking a spiritual home in the church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does his successive journeys run;
His kingdom spread from shore to shore
Till moons shall wax and wane no more."

TRAINING CONVERTS.

J. W. BOLTON.

Christ's mission upon earth was to seek and to save the lost. After finishing his earthly career, before ascending to the Father, he left a commission for the guidance of his followers, that they might continue his work. Hence the great mission of the church to-day is, to "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20), i. e., to lead souls to Christ and teach them to follow him.

Leading souls to Christ, then neglecting them, is one of the great hindrances to church growth to-day; hence it behooves us to help them all we can.

Their hearts are young and tender, and they are easily influenced. They have experiences before them which they are unacquainted with, and meeting with these tries their hearts and tests their faith.

They perhaps become discouraged because they cannot see in advance all the turns in the pathway of life, and need to be reminded that Christ said, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me (Matt. xi. 29), thus teaching them that they are to learn as they go along.

About the first duty which confronts the new convert is to testify to the name of Jesus, and to what he has done for him. If the convert does not commence this promptly he will find it a harder task ever after. It may be an aid to him to talk to him privately about the matter and to encourage him. If he fails to speak voluntarily, perhaps a personal request will aid him in taking part in the meeting, but this should be done only as a last resort, and then in a kind and winning way. Teach him that testifying is not only a duty but a privilege.

The necessity of reading God's word should be urged upon each, as we are to "search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they that testify

of me" (John v. 30). We should urge converts to endeavor to be like Timothy, of whom Paul said, that from a child he had known the holy scriptures (II Tim. iii. 15). In order to add the Christian grace of knowledge to our lives, we must know the will of God. Converts should be aided in searching out truths and applying them to their lives. They are as new-born babes, desiring the sincere milk of the word that they may grow thereby. A good plan is to arrange a series of lessons adapted to their needs, bringing out scriptures which are specially vital to them in their early Christian life. Especially should they be given a clear view of the plan of salvation and of the first principles of the gospel.

They should be aided in giving a reason for the hope that is within them (I Peter iii. 15).

Another important step is prayer. They should be led to believe that the Christian has a stronghold in prayer. It is a line to which we must cling if we would be kept out of the seething waters of the world. God holds his end of the line with the hand of love, and we are to cling to ours with the hand of faith, and clinging to this continually and sincerely, we shall be finally saved in God's everlasting kingdom, and be with him in his eternal home.

Secret prayer should be urged very strongly. It is in secret prayer that the Christian has his best chance to talk with God, and it is there the secret of the heart can be unfolded. It is there that we can train our minds and hearts for more public work. A certain sister said it was in secret that she learned to pray publicly. In secret prayer no one can act the hypocrite, for God knows the thoughts and intents of the heart, and he cannot be deceived.

Perhaps public prayer is harder for the convert than secret. Ofttimes he thinks that a public prayer must be just so long or just so elaborate in order to be acceptable. This is a mistaken notion. God does not want us to be known for our much speaking as were the pharisees. The simple, direct prayer of the publican was more acceptable than the self-laudatory prayer of the pharisee, standing with head and arms high in the air.

If converts are slow in taking up this line of work, get them to pray in a convert's meeting when only a few are together. Teach them that in prayer we are talking with God. In prayer we address him, thank him for past favors, and ask him for present and future blessings. In all prayer we should pray in faith—not like the old lady who prayed for a large hill to be removed from in front of her house. On arising the next morning, and looking out she saw the hill was not removed, and said, "It is just as I expected." Again we should never ask needlessly. George Muller, of England, said he always received an answer to his prayers because he never asked for anything but what he needed.

Another source of strength to the convert, is to train him in leading meetings. A timid leader can be encouraged very much by helping him to prepare an order of exercises, especially of the first part of the meeting, so that if he becomes embarrassed, he can look on his paper and see what comes next.

Personal work is another aid to the convert. If any one becomes discouraged, just set him to work helping some one else. A pastor once had a certain woman in his congregation who was very much discouraged in her Christian life; she even thought she had committed the unpardonable sin. Failing to encourage her in any other way, he told her to work for the conversion of her