

The Sermon.

"BROTHERHOOD."

"He first findeth *his own brother*, Simon."—St. John, i., 41.

Brotherhood is a term easily understood, and highly, yea, fashionably popular. Every one knows what it is to have a brother, especially in the dark day of trial; most people are ambitious of the title, though many take very round-about ways of earning it. Curiously enough Brotherhood in the general, is probably more popular than in the special. It is often easier to excite brotherly interest in the heathen, thousands of miles away, than in the heathen at our very doors. How many will listen with the very romance of interest to appeals on behalf of Hottentots or Hindoos, and spare neither time, nor thought, nor means, to further the Gospel among a people they have never seen, while they pass, every day of their lives, darkened, needy souls, for whose well-being they have never given two moments' thought, or two cents in coin. People will be romantic even in good doing, and, in their romance, fail to realise claims that should press upon them the strongest of all. Such persons have often been the butt of profane wits; and through their irrational and inconsistent methods, the entire subject of Foreign Missions has many a time been unjustly covered with ridicule and contempt.

St. Andrew's plan, and Our Lord's as well, was more common-sense and intelligible by far. Immediately the Saint had verified the identity of the Messiah, concerning whom his Master, John, had borne such striking testimony, he felt that the good news was too good to keep to himself, and so he set about seeking out *his own brother* to impart to him *first* the welcome intelligence. Andrew, the first Evangelist, was before all else a good brother. In the great church at Rome, which is dedicated to him, no other inscription could be found suitable, except "Andrew, the brother of Peter." Before casting his nets here and there, on Jew or Gentile, on Priest or Publican, he first bethought him of the one fellow-creature who was near to him by the ties of home and family. "Blood is thicker than water," is an old maxim, true in sacred as well as in social life. "If a man cares not for his own household, how shall he care for the Church of God?" "If a man loves not his brother,"—his nearest and dearest—his brother whom he sees every day—"how can he love God," or God's scattered children, "whom he has not seen?"

Our Lord's last counsel to the eleven was "Tarry ye in Jerusalem," and they obeyed the injunction to the letter—only abandoning the Holy City, when living there had become impossible—some of them refusing to leave even then, and for their loyalty meeting a martyr's fate.

Those illustrations have supplied arguments to many who were averse to missions to the heathen, and who, in their zeal against Foreign Missions, have really weakened the argument for the Home Missions, on which they proposed to concentrate the effort of the Christian Church. Extremes are dangerous either in religion or common life. The brother at home and the brother abroad have each their claim on Christian sympathy and effort; but the home brother's claim is prior and stronger, and it is