

"THE MORNING LIGHT IS BREAKING."

By Abbott E. Kittredge, D.D.

The hymn which begins with this cry of triumph, we have sung very many times, but we can sing it to-day with an assurance never known before. In the closer union of the mission boards of our own country and Canada, and in the grand result of the conferences of the past two years, which looks to the complete evangelization of the fields now occupied, we see that the day of small things has passed, and the great army is preparing for a united and determined forward movement. God is giving to His church the faith, which is the very substance of the final triumph, so that it is no longer merely possible, or probable, but certain, and this is arousing an enthusiasm in all believing hearts.

We see this in the largely increased gifts of the past year. It has been a year of financial anxiety, one of the "panic" years in our national history, and yet the contributions for Foreign Missions in our own church are larger than ever before, and the same is true of the other branches of the Christian Church.

Then with this increasing interest and growing enthusiasm at home, there are many signs of promise in heathen lands, which strengthen our faith that "God's time to favor Zion, yea, the set time, is come." In China, the national inertia of ages is being thrown off, steps are in progress towards a Constitutional monarchy, and in one section of the Empire the Christian's Bible has been adopted as a text book in the secular schools, because the official mind regards that book as the explanation of our higher civilization.

In Japan, there is, among the educated classes, a dissatisfaction with the Buddhist religion, and the native Christian Church has grown so strong that its pastors and officers are claiming to be able to care for their churches, a large portion of which are now self-supporting.

In India, there is a widespread religious restlessness, a longing after a soul peace, which Hinduism does not give, and a growing eagerness to know about Jesus Christ. In my recent visit I found in Bombay, Madras, Lahore, and in our own Aroet Mission, the same wonderful fact, that villages which only a few years ago were hostile to Christianity were now sending requests for Bible readers to come and teach them the truth. But all these pleas had to be refused, because there was not money enough in the treasuries of the boards to permit of any enlargement of the work.

Thus God is throwing wide open the doors of the world for the entrance of the Gospel, and by His spirit He is making hearts eager for the glad tidings, and it is for us to prove our loyalty to our glorious Leader by gifts so liberal that our missionaries may enter every open door, lifting up Jesus the Crucified One, who gives rest to the weary and heavy laden, and is the Bread of Life to starving souls.

An intelligent Hindu said to me, "If the religion of Jesus is from God, and His words are the words of God, then that is what I with thousands of others want. For our religions are the speculations of man about God, but man is finite and cannot know the infinite." Now because we know that God was in Christ, know that He is the light of the world, know that the infinite love embraced all sinners, and that He would not that any perish, let us keep step with the Providence of our covenant-keeping God, and count all things as loss, that Christ may be glorified in the speedy redemption of the whole world.

"The morning light is breaking." May the baptism of entire consecration to the will of God fall upon the members

of our General Synod, kindling an enthusiasm for service, which will reach to all our churches, and making the coming year glorious in the history of the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour.
—N. Y. Christian Intelligencer.

THE CONFESSION OF SELF-DEFENCE.

When a Christian does something that he has to defend before a fellow Christian, he is pretty sure to be in the wrong. To be on the defensive, as to our personal practises, is to proclaim openly that we have doubts of their rightfulness whether any one else has or not. The apologetic look or word of the Christian worker, whether layman or minister, who makes for the smoking-car as he boards a train with fellow Christians, is pitiable evidence of his own uneasiness and self-condemnation. To go through life indulging in any practise of which we instinctively say, "I know this seems wrong, but I assure you it is not," is to be cumbered with a burden of self-defence that God never intended any man to carry. We ought not to have to defend our actions; they ought to defend us. And they will, when they are clean away from any border-line of uncertainty.

IT IS BETTER.

Keep a smile on your lips; it is better
To joyfully, hopefully cry
For the end you would gain than to
Fetter
Your life with a moan and a sigh.
There are clouds in the firmament ever
The beauty of heaven to mar,
Yet nothing so profound there is never
But somewhere is shining a star.
Keep a song in your heart; it will
lighten
The duty you hold in your hand;
Its music will graciously brighten
The work your high purpose has
planned.
Your notes to the lives that are sad
denied
May make them to hopefully yearn,
And earth shall be wondrously glad
denied
By songs they shall sing in return.
Keep a task in your hands, you must
labor;
By toil is true happiness won;
For foe and for friend and for neighbor,
Rejoice there is much to be done,
Endeavor, by crowning life's duty
With joygiving song and with smile,
To make the world fuller of beauty
Because you were in it a while.

PRAYER.

We beseech Thee, O God, to save us from empty profession and mere lip service in the Christian life. We thank Thee for the assurance that Jesus Christ is indeed the way the truth and the life. Help us to accept Him sincerely, to trust Him fully and to serve Him faithfully. Thus may our lives be strong and calm, unshaken by life's tempests, unmoved by the waves of loss and sorrow. Built upon the eternal rock, may we be a refuge and a help for others in distress. Grant that the evidence of Christ's power to save may be so manifested in us that we may be His witnesses continually, and everywhere may men be persuaded that in Him alone can true security and perfect peace be found.
Amen.

To see that by being holy, you bring to their true depth and lustre those qualities which, faded and dull, they honor still among themselves—that is the strongest influence which can go forth from you to make your brethren rise up and go with you to God.—Phillips Brooks.

SERVING THE CHURCH.***Some Bible Hints.**

"Aimable," "lovable," must be the adjective of all things connected with religion; if not, they are not yet connected with religion (v. 1).

"The thing you long for, that you are." Test your religion by the extent of your desire for the church (v. 2).

You are dwelling in God's house if your spirit is there, though sickness keep your body at home (v. 4).

All lowliest service for the church is glorious. Who would not rather wash Christ's feet than place a crown on the head of an earthly king? (v. 10).

Suggestive Thoughts.

All service of men serves the true church, for her interests are as broad as mankind.

At bottom, we serve the church not by doing but by being.

Let Christ choose for you your service in the church, and accept it, whether it is high or low in men's eyes.

Service of the church, if it is genuine, will be put first, far above the service of self.

A Few Illustrations.

Servants of a household must be in the house; you cannot serve the church and stay at home.

Employers like workmen who identify themselves with the establishment, and make its honors theirs. So let us identify ourselves with the church.

We often long to see Christ. But we can see Him in the church, which is His body.

Is a soldier only for battles? No, but for hard marches, dull camps, and monotonous drills. So a Christian must sometimes expect dull routine in his church work.

To Think About.

Do I live for the church?

Has the church always the first claim upon my time?

Am I proud of the church's success as of my own?

A Cluster of Quotations.

We are the members of the "body of Christ"; He is the head. Be careful, then, for the head suffers with the body.—J. Wilbur Chapman.

We are members of one another because we are members of the same head.—F. B. Meyer.

There is no such thing as a church of God in which the spirit of God does not preside.—Arthur T. Pierson.

Only Christ can influence the world; but all that the world sees of God is what it sees of Him in the life of His followers.—Henry Drummond.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.

M., July 27.—Grace given to each. Eph. 4: 1-7.

T., July 28.—Serving in worship. Acts 2: 39-42.

W., July 29.—By endurance. Acts 8: 1-3.

T., July 30.—By obeying. 1 Sam. 15: 19-22.

T., July 31.—By shining. Matt. 5: 13-16.

S., Aug. 1.—By praise. Ps. 100.

Sun., Aug. 2.—Topic—Songs of the Heart.

VIII. How can we serve the Church? Ps. 84. (Consecration meeting.)

Do not allow clouds to get into your soul. The clouds came upon John, the Beloved, but he gave us nevertheless apocalyptic visions of transcendent glory. They came upon John Bunyan, but in the very midst of them he dreamed an immortal dream.

* Y.P. Topic, Aug. 2.—How can we serve the church? Ps. 84.