

THE MISSIONARY CALL.

BY THE HON. AND RT. REV. THE LORD BISHOP
OF PETERBOROUGH.

"A man's foes shall be they of his own household."

ST. MATT. x. 36.



IN our work of the Foreign Mission Field we are reaping the truth, "it is more blessed to give than to receive," so that if it were only to secure a greater blessing for ourselves we ought to multiply our zeal in sending out to foreign lands the truth of Jesus Christ. One instance of this fact lies in the lesson of our text; for the important truth relating to the character of the Christianity we are expected to possess is

expressed in the text, and is more plainly seen in our Church life abroad than here at home. The words are quoted by Christ from the Old Testament. Micah had spoken them hundreds of years before, in Hezekiah's time, and by them had described the corrupted state of Israel in his day, when all society seemed out of joint, all confidence extinct, and all the dearest human ties strained beyond the limits of tenacity. And now, when our Lord is furnishing the first Missionary effort of the Church—when He is sending forth the twelve to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and giving them their commission for the work—He quotes the prophet's words in order to describe the characteristics of the faith they were to sow. In them He sets before the Church for every age, the fact that Christianity must be a warfare: that though He came to be the Prince of Peace, His advent would not at first bring peace; that there would be a thousand ties that must be sundered, and connections that must be given up, in the spiritual development of the kingdom He had come to found; that the sword was to do its work (that is to say, in spiritual phraseology, ties must be snapped, unions broken, and bands cut in two) before the victory of perfect peace, such as He gives, can steal into the soul or fall upon the world.

It is the character of Christianity as a great fighting force that He insists on here, and that the Missionary efforts of His Church both then and now must always clearly emphasize. The Christianity which can prevail must—though it be the leaven working its silent growth—be also a sword dividing life from life, and heart from heart, and right from wrong. It will be a disturbing force, not a mere path of ease, and not a comfortable inheritance of pleasant privilege, that never raises obstacles or wakes up enemies, but a real effort of vital, active, energetic life, in which obstacles will soon be found that we must meet and overcome, and enemies will spring to light in even closest and most dear relationships. Such, so Christ tells us, must ever be individually and collectively the experience of His discipleship, for the soul life, when it is touched by Christ, as it will rise into those higher planes than those on which the lives of other men are led, has to wrench off so many roots, to lacerate so many cords, and overcome so many obstacles before it frees itself. Of such a life Christ, as the Truth, can only say, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth—but a sword," and, "A man's foes shall be they of his own household."

It is perhaps this aspect of Christianity that we are readiest to overlook. Here in our happy lot, with our peculiar heritage of easy Christianity—our own inheritances of luxury and wealth, and more than this, by the fashion of the Christianity that we profess, by the character of the religious life now most in vogue, we are encouraged to overlook the meaning of Christ's words; and possibly the aspect of that Christianity that we send forth to other men, the necessity of the fulfilment of this characteristic of the Christian life when we transmit it to far heathen lands, may help us better to realize the general and universal experience that true religious life must in itself raise obstacles, that true Christianity can only have the impress of reality when it verifies these words, "A man's foes shall be they of his own household."

(To be continued.)

KINDNESS TO ANIMALS.—If a pet horse or dog, or any other animal, fails to respond to a kind effort to teach it, or to induce it to do its usual work, something is physically wrong with it. "I talk to my horses," said Count Tolstoi, when somebody expressed surprise at seeing no whip by his side, "I do not beat them."

THE motto deeply cut upon Eddystone Lighthouse would be a good one for every Church worker to take to heart. The words are these: "To give light and to save life."