

MISSIONARY EXTENSION.

MYRTLE V. FREEMAN.

As I look at the subject I am filled with awe at its magnitude. More than eighteen hundred years ago, as high as the heavens, and as broad as the earth; God is its Father and sacrifice its mother. As it starts forth from above it seems to me God called it back and said, "No, I cannot let you go." But sacrifice replied, "Not so, consider the lost ones of earth and your plan of salvation." And God sent forth this dove of "peace on earth."

First it nestles in Bethlehem's manger, then flits away to lowly Nazareth, and there rears its unfledged wings until it starts forth once more from Capernaum—that seaside town so sacred to memory—never to rest again until it enters the portals of eternity and "missionary extension" has been accomplished.

Missionary,—what word in our language expresses so much of all that is good and great and noble! It rests, it soothes, it strengthens; and why? Because it has so much of Christ in it. And who would not wish for its extension? The dictionary tells us its meaning is: "One sent to propagate religion; pertaining to missions, as a missionary fund, meetings," etc.

We will not stop to look back on the lives of the many missionaries of the past. I was going to say great missionaries, but to my mind the word needs no emphasizing, it is all there. We are more or less acquainted with the lives of some of them at least. It is true some of us may not have the privilege of reading the missionary literature of modern times, but we all can read the lives of those who composed the first missionary society that ever graced the earth—not with a grace of culture and beauty, but with grace that an oasis presents to the eyes of the thirsty traveller—the twelve chosen at Capernaum and sent out by their blessed Lord and Master, their President and ours. Judged from a human standpoint, they were certainly unpromising, these members of the first missionary society—from the lower walks of life, slow of heart, dull of understanding, with brawny arms and sunburned faces; but time has shown that Christ makes no mistakes.

As I cast my eyes over this audience—an audience of Christians—I am led to ask, Why is it there are so many in the world who are still out of Christ; why so many who love the things of this world more than the heavenly; why so little of this "peace on earth, good will to men." Why is the harvest so small? Where can the fault lie? Is it because the seed has lost its virtue, has it become useless and of no value? Why, O why? We wait for the answer and Christ replies: "Ye are the salt of the earth, ye are the lights of the world. And will you ask why the darkness?" But who, dear Lord, are the "ye?" Why you twelve, you Christians. If this be so, if it is at our doors the fault lies

"O fill us with thy fullness, Lord,
Until our very hearts o'erflow,
In kindling thought and glowing mood,
Thy love to tell, thy praise to show."

"Lord, speak to us, that we may speak
In living echoes of thy tone;
As thou hast sought, so let us seek
Thy erring children, lost and lone."

And as our cry ceases the answer comes borne on the dewy winds of night: "Take up thy cross and follow me,"—"Jesus Christ—the same yesterday, to-day and forever;" and we catch the echo as it resounds from one age to the other: "Follow me forever."

This is our President—our Leader—who never changes. The same loving heart that prompted him to point to the twelve illiterate men at far-away Capernaum as his mother and sisters and brethren, is still beating for us; the same precepts given to them are meant for us; the answer that answered the how of those days must answer it now—the only answer we can safely follow. But O, how apt we are to listen to the teaching of other lips! Something a little newer is suggested, that can be carried out without much sacrifice, in fact with no sacrifice at all; and this creeping in of worldly precepts is choking the seed, thus checking its growth and destroying the prospects of abundant harvest. Hence, the cry of earnest Christians for true missionary extension.

"Without sacrifice," did you say? That would surely be something new. Did you ever know a missionary without a sacrifice? Is it a possibility? Can the ties of birth be severed? Our Leader and Saviour left a crown of glory, a throne of heavenly bliss, for earthly poverty, sorrow and shame—the shameful death of the cross. Can we follow him without sacrifice? The twelve "left all and followed him," and sacrificed their lives in the cause. And we, can we be Christians without it? Can we keep our lives? Christ says: "He that saves his life shall lose it, and he that loses his life for my sake shall save it." But yet we can be Christians without so much as sacrificing our sensitive cultured feelings!! Why, you know we have nerves that shrink from coming in contact with the coarser clay of earth; we must live at ease in Zion; we could not give up the dainties of life, because we are delicate; we could not go hungry one day; we must not wear a coat—or it may be a dress—that is a little shabby, or, worse still, out of style! You know we have a position in society to keep up, that must be attended to first.

O my sister, pause a moment. Christ says, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness." What is this righteousness? Is it the keeping up of aristocratic society for the shallow minds of the fops of earth; or is it seeking and saving the lost ones? Let this be first: "Preaching the gospel to every creature"; then if we have time to spare, we will be all the better fitted to elevate society, and "missionary extension" will be accomplished.

But some one says, why all this talk about sacrifice, especially to a people of this sort?

Many of us are Christian Endeavorers, others hold offices in missionary societies, and I am sure we sacrifice and give a certain amount every month—or it may be every week—toward sending the gospel to the heathen. That is good, my sister, but are we doing all that is required of us? We may be satisfied, and in the eyes of the world justified; but in God's sight will our offering compare favourably with the widow's mite, or the rich man's abundance? Oh, let us be honest with ourselves, lest we lose our inheritance! "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly." Can this be why the harvest is not more plentiful? Can it be that those who have this precious seed are sowing it sparingly?

O God! will some precious soul be lost because I have failed to sow the seed; because I have failed to say a word at the proper time?

"The stone I might have lifted
Out of a brother's way;
The bit of heartsome counsel
I was hurried too much to say;
The loving touch of the hand,
The gentle and winsome tone,
That I had no time, no thought for,
With troubles enough of my own."

"But life is all too short,
And sorrow is all too great
To suffer our slow compassion
That carries until too late.
It is not the things we do,
It's the things we leave undone
Which gives us the bitter heartache
At the setting of the sun."

We have probably said enough about sacrifice. Some one is saying at my left, that it must be a dismal thing to be a missionary if it is all sacrifice. Oh no, it is not; love has a part in this great work. Love is the vine; sacrifice the natural fruit, for if we have Christ-love in our hearts, it will be as natural for us to sacrifice as it is for a healthy vine to bear fruit. Christ says, "If ye love me ye will keep my commandments." The world knows he says this, and they also know he commands us to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul," etc., and "thy neighbour as thyself." They know too the commission that he gave to the twelve, that noble band of missionaries, was to go to the lost sheep, to preach the gospel to every creature, and to do to others as you would have others do to you.

Now, the world is looking for all this, and they have a right to expect it of us; for we claim to be Christians, to do whatever the Lord would have us do, and are they looking in vain? Are they turning away disappointed? Did they see the slight as we passed a sister or a brother coldly by; did they hear us say we were too busy with the things pertaining to this life to attend the prayer meetings? Are they asking for bread and are we giving stones? Is this the cause of so much wayside? Christ has left to us the redeeming of the world, the cultivation of the wayside, stony, thorny ground. And oh, brothers and sisters, there is only one way to perform this great work. That is, to have the love of Christ so permeating our whole being that we will love all the world, and like him be able to distinguish between a person and his weakness, and never treat a fellow mortal with contempt. To be so pure of heart that when they look at us they cannot but be purer,—the hard gound must become soft under the melting influence of Christ's love.

Christ does not say you are your own salt, but "the salt of the earth." The light you