

Sermon Preached at the Central Association of N. S.

BY REV. M. P. FREEMAN.

"Go ye therefore into all the world."—Mark 16: 15.

(Conclusion.) It remains to indicate certain reasons that should stimulate the churches in their prosecution of the work of the Lord.

Missionary work is needful to their own prosperity. The ground was cursed for man's sake. He must eat bread henceforth "in the sweat of his face." In this there was a gracious purpose. Not less kindly is the law that demands toil and sacrifice from the followers of Jesus, when they would bring forth from the reluctant earth the fruits of righteousness. Every true service for Christ reacts upon the doer to better his heart. For their own sakes believers should give themselves to the helping of others. Work promotes health and happiness, while increasing both mental and spiritual power. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Working for Jesus may bring weakness, after the giving there may be less money in the purse, but in either case the compensation is so great that there is a positive gain. The opposers of missions seem happy when there is nothing to do but to pray and exert. They can rest on occasion and sing very sweetly.

"Salvation O the joyful sound, 'Tis pleasure to our ears," but just ask them for a dollar to make this salvation known to men, and they speedily subside. We thank God that the number of such is diminishing. They will hinder the prosperity of any church to which they may belong. Some one has truly said, "Through and through, the religion of Christ is a missionary religion." The church that is not a missionary church is not truly Christian. Life is from the centre outwards. The tree that ceases to lay hold of dead matter and incorporate it as living tissue, has already begun to die. The attempt to live without accepting life is the mark of death. Many years ago some 25 churches belonging to an association in the United States voted against doing anything for foreign missions. Only six or seven of these churches still continue, the rest having died out. A few of the churches in this same association resolved to give for that cause, and they have steadily increased in numbers and influence. When Judson went to Burma the Baptists in America were weak, and struggling to maintain their own institutions; but their numbers, intelligence and wealth, since that day, has been the wonder of the world. Had they pursued the course of the churches just referred to, they could never have taken this proud position. They would have divided into comparative nothingness. The 3,000,000 Baptists of the American Union attest to the truth of inspiration. "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth." Those half dozen remnants prove the truth of the converse statement—"There is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty."

The church must have an expansive character. When Rome ceased to be aggressive, she began to decline. Those barbarians whom she would not subdue became her conquerors. If we, as a denomination, cease to be aggressive, we shall lose our power, and surrender the field to those whom we should have subdued for Christ. "The Christian religion," says Prof. Max Muller, "would cease to exist if it ceased to be missionary." If we must not fall into the hands of the foe, we must march through the sea.

Again, the work of missions is laid upon the church because men are perishing. "The whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint, there is no soundness, both in soul and in sin, and a feeble cry is heard." Write all the sermons you please respecting the nobility of human nature, and glorify its recuperative energies; yet the terrible fact remains—man is lost—without the grace of God he is helpless, without the gospel he can know nothing of the way being trodden by the Lord Jesus has committed to us the salvation for human woes. Men must lift up the brazen serpent in the wilderness. So, also, must Christ crucified be lifted up before all people, that they may look and live.

He who, after labors unnumbered, opened the door of Central Africa to Christianity, wrote with trembling hands just before his death: "May heaven's richest blessing come down on every one who will help to heal this open sore of the world." Africa has, indeed, its mighty plague spot; but the disease is everywhere. The world's impurity, its blindness and its misery appeal to every Christian heart. The heathen nations have their own ideas of religion. Their gods are many. In India alone they have 200,000,000. Would that we in many of the apostles' parts. With the fervid zeal of the early church we should march forward from victory to victory. The little plot we cultivate in India would soon be filled with the gospel and the sphere of our activities widened to the regions beyond. It is evident that we are not doing what we might. We seem indeed to be only partially awake to a sense of the work we ought to do. Our missionaries stand face to face with heathenism. They see the field as we cannot. Their spirits are deeply stirred as they behold the millions around them hastening to eternal we. Hence their urgent appeal for reinforcements. Is their demand for 50 additional workers unreasonable? Do they set before us an impossible task? By no means. We are able if we will. Is it that we go on at our slow pace and let generations perish, that by a grand rally of the focus at our command, at once occupy every town and village of our adopted field? The way is clear, and the work possible; but when are workers to enter? Let us see our coin, our notes and bank stock bright with the image and superscription of our Lord. Let us give to Him as we have never given.

We have read of a Swedish princess, who had it in her heart to found a home for incurables in the island of Gothland. To procure the means she sold her diamonds. One day she visited one of the

poor inmates who seemed particularly poor and miserable, and for whom she had prayed much. As the princess approached the dying one she exclaimed: "Thank God that the Lord of Jesus Christ has died for sinners like you, and that He has changed your tears running fast down her cheeks as she spoke. "In those tears," said the princess, "I saw my diamonds again."

Tears of joy, glistening in the light of heaven! They are precious in God's sight, and best gifts to those who have been instrumental in their conversion. The consecrated toilers in the gospel field shall have their reward in jewels of the crown of kings.

Brother Growler.

Brother Growler is like a cheesnut burr; there is excellent meat in him, but he is prickly and uncomfortable outside. His mother used to say of him when he was a young man: "It'll be a long courtship that Eliab will have, if he ever enters the holy state; for no girl that he would look at, who don't both summer and winter him, and that, likely enough, more than once or twice—will ever find out enough of the real good that there is in him, to risk marrying him." She was right. The neighborhood for years had heard him uttering the words, "I am blessedness," if for any kind; when suddenly it transpired, as the phrase now is, that for five years he has been spending his Sunday evenings under a particular roof in an out-of-the-way spot which had eluded the general gaze, and one Thanksgiving night-fall the parson went thither, and Eliab Growler brought thence away, and his cottage—since his mother's death, solitary—a young woman of whom he might in superlative honesty have said to the little circle of wedding guests, as Petruchio did of Katharina:

"—honest company I thank you all, That have beheld me give away myself To the most patient, sweet and virtuous wife."

She was patient, sweet and virtuous with him, and she had a good influence over him. But, as Horace had remarked about 1,500 years before Brother Growler was born, "you can't drive out nature with a fork, so that it won't keep coming back." Eliab grew stout. It wasn't a good or cross, growl toward her, but it was much the same to the ear of others.

Eliab wasn't converted in a revival—not by any means. He attended all the meetings, and found all the fault he could. Mr. Moody he considered "superior," and "at an account anyway." Mr. Stanley "sang well enough, but, for his part, he preferred a choir; and if Henry Carey's lines had occurred to him, he might have cited them as meeting his views on that subject:

—let the singing singers
With vocal voices most melodious,
In sweet confession, out volubly
Even sing and tell.

And when "converts" came to be "received," Eliab sneered at some and snubbed others; obliging to the boys and girls because they were "too young to know their own minds;" to the young men and women because "taint any resist the temptations of the world;" and to the few gray-haired ones, because, "as their turn came," they were "too old and too 'not in their own ways' to change much."

Eliab's turn came one very stormy Sunday in midwinter, when he had waded knee-deep in the yet not wholly melted snow, through an unbroken road, and got into the house, in the secret hope, they didn't rejoice in a bell—that he should find it unopened, and so have the luxury of growling at the sexton for not doing his duty, and at the minister for being afraid of the weather, and at that day got in, where the arrow of the unconverted minister rebuked them all by being there. But he found the paths dug out and the doors open. His own clock was slow, and he had miscalculated the time, and was half an hour late. Not only had meeting begun, but there were more than fifty people in the hall. Some were much less able to face a storm than he was. As he afterwards remarked, "he was all knocked into a heap by the unexpected turn which affairs had taken, and he kind of lost his presence of mind." And when the minister gave out his text—"Nay, but (I mean who art thou that repliest against God?—it took hold of him as nothing ever had before. He floundered round inwardly a few times, in the vain attempt to parry the home thrusts of the preacher, but with little success. The truth of God that day got in, where the arrow of the Syrian smote the king of Israel; "between the joints of the harness," and Eliab was sore wounded. Nobody else gave sign of being hurt, but he saw a few things in a new light, and felt all things as he never felt them before. He was in the course of time, for he had growled so at other people's hurry that he couldn't hurry himself—he joined the church and became "Brother Growler."

Nevertheless he was "Brother Growler" still. Even religion—pure and undefiled—cannot make a black man white, a short man tall, a shallow man a sage, or a gruff grumbler uniformly gentle and generous. Not that Brother Growler sought to justify himself in fault: finding as a Christian virtue, nor that he did not recognize the evil of, and honestly try to overcome his tendency toward laziness and harsh criticism. But he particularly enjoyed the twelfth chapter of Paul's first Epistle to the good people of Corinth, and among the "diversities of gifts," and "diversities of ministrations," and "diversities of workings," he still did not come within the recognized and useful variety. If all were alike—does not Paul say it—"where were the body?"

Brother Growler was unquestionably right in this idea, so far as it justified for him, being what he was, to find him a place in the Church of Christ. His mistake, if he made any, was in forgetting that sanctification is a prime necessity for worthy church membership, and that—humanly speaking—some need a great deal more satisfaction than others. His spiritual mind, in this respect, was sometimes "reined to exhaust itself be-

fore it reached the concluding verse—which it would have been a good plan for him to have printed in large letters, with an index finger pointing to them, and then hanging over the fireplace of his home:

But desire earnestly the greater grace. And moreover a most excellent way show I unto you.

"I expect you have a hard time of it," Brother Growler, after hearing one of his growls in the prayer-meeting, said an occasional visitor to the pastor. "On the contrary," replied the reply. "Brother Growler very much, and find him—in his way—extremely useful. He is a safety-valve, loaded so lightly as to begin to sizzle and scream long before there is any real danger; while we might all be blown to atoms before Brother Testator, over there on the other side of the aisle, would give the alarm."

"And besides," continued the pastor, "Brother Growler has a good heart in him; and I have known him, after one of his most characteristic speeches in opposition to a measure, to come down handsomely for its financial support. Only the other day he finished up a terrible tirade against one of our Congregational societies, which, in his judgment, has become 'insupportably false to the sentiment of the churches, and delivered over to the domination of a ring of old fogies,' by quietly doubling his usual subscription to the same. I tell you, Brother Growler is nobody's fool, and he is as useful to the church as the pepper-cast to a dinner-table."

Afraid of a Shadow.

We were spending Sunday in Torquay, the pretty Devonshire port which stretches so gracefully along the curves of Tor Bay. The air was palpitating, that fair Sunday morning, with the rich melody of the Sunday bells; we joined a great throng of people and were swept along in their current to one of the largest dissenting chapels of the place.

We soon found ourselves in a comfortable and substantial house of worship to which the good Anglicans refuse to allow the name of church. The house was filled with a quiet and orderly congregation. The regular minister was absent, and in his place officiated a young Scotch clergyman, who gave us the twenty-third Psalm, of which he gave a fine running commentary. When he came to the verse, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death," he abruptly paused and said, "I am a Scotchman; let me tell you a little incident that occurred not long ago in the Scotch parish where I was laboring. He leaned from the pulpit, and with the sweetest of Scotch accents began, in a low, tender voice:

"I was sitting in my study one Saturday evening, when a message came to me that one of the goodliest among the Scotch people, who were upon the slope of our Highland hills was dying, and wanted to see the minister. Without loss of time I crossed the wide heath to his comfortable little cottage. When I entered the low room I found the aged man, propped up with pillows and breathing with such difficulty that it was apparent he was near his end. 'Jean,' he said to his wife, 'give the minister a stool and leave us for a bit, for I had seen the minister alone.'

"As soon as the door had closed he turned the most pathetic pair of gray eyes upon me I had ever looked into, and said, in a voice shaken with emotion, 'Minister, I'm dying, and—and—I'm afraid!'

"I began at once to repeat the strong old promises with which God's Word assures us, 'but in the midst of them he stopped me—'

"I ken them a', he said mournfully, 'I ken them a', but somehow they dinna give me comfort!'

"Do you not believe them?" "We'll say my heart!" he replied earnestly.

"Where, then, is there any room for fear, with such a saving faith?" "For a' that, minister, I'm afraid—I'm afraid!"

"I took up the well-worn Bible which lay on his bed, and turned to the Psalm which I have read to you to-day, and remember the twenty-third Psalm? I began.

"Remember it?" he said vehemently. "I kenned it lang afore ye were born; ye need na' read it; I've commed it a thousand times on the hill side."

"But there is one verse which you have not taken in."

"He turned upon me with a half reproachful and even stern look. 'I na' tell you I kenned it every word afore ye were born. Would that I could slowly repeated the verse, 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me.'

"You have been a shepherd all your life, and you have watched the heavy shadows pass over the valleys end over the hills, hiding for a little while all the light of the sun. Did these shadows ever frighten you?"

"Frighten me?" he said quickly. "Na, na! Davie Donaldson has Covenanters' bluid in his veins; neither shadow nor substance could we have feared."

"But did these shadows never make you believe that you would not see the sun again—that it was gone forever?" "Na, na, I couldna be sic a simpleton as that."

"Nevertheless, that is just what you are doing now. He looked at me with incredulous eyes.

"Yes, I continued, 'the shadow of death is over you, and it hides for a little the Sun of Righteousness, who shines all the same behind it; but it's only a shadow, remember that! The Psalmist calls it; a shadow that will pass, and when it has passed, before you will be the everlasting hills in their unclouded glory.'

now bright with an almost supernatural radiance, he exclaimed, lifting his hands representatively to heaven, 'Aye, aye, I see it a' now! Death is only a shadow—' he shaded his eyes with his hands, as if he were looking at a shadow that will pass—na, na, I'm afraid nae mair!"

It is not possible that any words of mine should have power to reproduce to the eye or mind of the reader the tone, the attitude and the vivid rendering of two incidents. But as the people wended their way home that Sunday through the streets of Torquay, not a few, I am sure, repeated to themselves the words of the old shepherd, and gathered comfort therefrom: "Na, na, I'm afraid nae mair!"—Christian Intelligence.

She Had Not Style Enough.

A while ago, in the West, a poor woman killed herself. There is nothing very unusual about a suicide, but this was a peculiar case. She was a school-teacher. As a teacher she was capable enough, but she dressed shabbily and lived poorly.

There was a meeting of the ladies, and they decided that a teacher receiving the salary she did ought, in self-respect, to have more style about her; that deep down she must dislodge a miserly and contracted soul. One who had gone on a free pass to Kansas City told how she had seen teachers dress there; and one who had gone as far as Chicago, with the air of a lady who had travelled, informed the circle that a school-teacher in Chicago could not be distinguished from a real lady; one wise-faced old gossipier thought it was a bad example for a teacher to set to little girls, to dress in no better style, and the result was the meeting adjourned to home and lay siege to their husbands and brothers; and in a day or two, a notice was sent the school-teacher that her services were not altogether satisfactory, and that her resignation would be acceptable. She sent it in a gentle note in which she took occasion to say that it must be her fault if she could not give satisfaction.

Then she took morphine and died. And then it transpired that the poor woman was denying herself in order to educate a younger brother and support an aged mother; and when this fact was made known, the shame-stricken women of that place dressed the poor woman richly for the grave, and spread leaves of rare and costly flowers on the lid of the casket which made her narrow house.

They did not mean to be cruel, but their were contracted lives; they were not accustomed to seeing the grander side of human nature; and of that self-abnegation which smiles while the heart within is breaking they knew nothing. They reproach themselves now that they did not ask the poor woman for her condition before they had her dismissed, but it happened too late. She did not even need the rich robes and the flowers. Her bed was soft enough, and perfect peace had come at last, and she needed no post-mortem courtesies. It is quite possible that the good deeds of her life had sprung up in flowers around, and that her narrow bed had turned into jewels to make her crown.

The story is worth repeating, because it may serve to remind the careless of the world that hearts are breaking every day; that around us always are those who need help, and that sometimes even the gift of a kind word has broken the pall of despair which had gathered over a human soul, permitting, through the rift in the cloud, the sunshine of hope to steal in. It is not safe to judge by appearances. It is seldom that a brave soul makes any plaint; rather, like the wild beast, it licks its wounds in silence, and waits, whether those wounds heal, or whether death comes under their fatal drain. This woman in Kansas toiled until her heart broke, though her only fault was that there was not enough style about her. Her neighbors have since discovered that they are poor judges of what real style is, and they are not half as comfortable under the thought as the poor woman is. They have, too, a haunting fear that on resurrection morning they will see those shabby robes once more; that they will be wonderfully transfused; that their ineffable splendor will be pointed out, and that some flaming angel will call the attention of the company to the fact that the one who wore those robes on earth was weak and that she died because her garments were not far enough from the wish they had gone and asked the poor woman something about herself before they caused her to be discharged—Selected.

LOVE.

Love makes drudgery delightful. It forgets self, and lives for others. Love outruns law and leaves it far behind. Not to be able and permitted to serve is a penalty. The question is not, "What can I do?" but "What may I do?" To give pleasure is its joy. To give its object is to give itself. Love is the secret spring of the believer's life; and this makes him often pass in the world for an enthusiast. It stops at nothing. Mountains of difficulty are no more to it than playthings. It claps the cross and kisses it. Love strengthened Mary, when the soldiers quaked with fear. Love kept her hovering round the sepulchre when all the disciples were scattered to their own homes. Love has a joy of its own, a stranger cannot understand. It is fed by the unseen spirit of God, while resting on an unseen Saviour. To lose life for Him is to gain it. To suffer martyrdom for Jesus, is to see Him standing at the right hand of God waiting to welcome His servant to glory.—Selected.

—Some one said to Rev. Dr. Deems, of New York, while cheering him in his work, "An ounce of faith is worth more than a ton of epiphany." There is much truth in this. A word of cheer or an ounce of assistance, while we are living, is worth a ton of praise after we are dead. A good wife at our side says, "Remember that, all ye husbands, while your first wife is living—Western Recorder."

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